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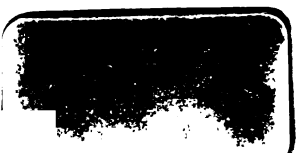




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THE ADOPTED CHILD.

THE HISTORY  
OF  
AN ADOPTED CHILD.

BY  
GERALDINE ENDSOR JEWSBURY,

AUTHOR OF  
"MARIAN WITHERS," "BORROWS OF GENTILITY," ETC.

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THE FRONTISPIECE FROM A DRAWING  
JOHN ABSOLON.

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LONDON:  
GRANT AND GRIFFITH,  
SUCCESSORS TO  
JOHN HARRIS, CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

—  
1853.

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TO  
MISS MARGARETTA DARBY,

*This little Book*

IS  
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY  
THE AUTHOR.



## PREFACE.

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I DO not think that children are so happy as it is the fashion to represent them.

To be sure, children are made of more importance, and their inclinations are more studied, than was the fashion when I was a child ; still, children are so dependent on those around them, that they can scarcely be said to live their own lives ; they have no root in themselves, but grow in the life of those who are set over them. They are certainly exempt from the great cares of the world, such as making money, and earning their own bread and milk for breakfast, but they have their own troubles, which they feel with a keenness, against which they are provided with no defence. A harsh word, or a cold, impatient look, from one they love,

throws a greater damp upon a young child's enjoyment, than a tangible misfortune in after life, when they are become harder and more self-sufficing. Children have, too, an intense and instinctive sympathy with those round them, that resembles the instinct of a dumb animal. They know when those they love are suffering, and share their sorrow with a personal reality, that happily grows less vivid as they become older. Those who have the care of children would do well to recollect this, and not allow the weight of their own depression to be apparent to these tender little ones, who have a capacity for suffering seldom suspected. It is not MOTHERS who need to be told this, but I recollect so well all my own unhappiness, living as I mostly did, during my childhood and early girlhood, amongst people "who were not fond of children," that I have written this history; partly in the hope that grown-up aunts and elder sisters—when they are tempted to be out of patience "with those tiresome little ones,"—may exercise some forbearance, and not bid them "go away and play in the nursery, and make no noise,"—remembering that kind looks and words are

the manna on which young children live, and that the most turbulent of them are more easily pained than a grown person can realize.

As the experience of one bears more or less resemblance to the experience of all, it may be that the record of my own mistakes and their consequences, and the good counsels that have been of use and comfort to me, may also be of the same use and comfort to others.

In this hope, and with my best wishes to all my young readers, I subscribe myself,

Their affectionate friend,

“THE ADOPTED CHILD.”



# THE HISTORY OF AN ADOPTED CHILD.

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## CHAPTER I.

I WAS an adopted child. I did not live with my own parents ; but as far back as I can recollect I lived with my grandfather and grandmother, at a place called "The Cottage," in the neighbourhood of a very small town in one of the Midland Counties.

The "Cottage" stood away from the high road, and the approach to it was by a gate which opened out of the high way into a broad gravel path, banked up on each side, and hedged by a row of tall trees, the spaces between them planted like a flower-bed with primroses, violets, lilies of the valley, and cowslips. This path was just wide enough for a cart to pass down, and was called the "Foredrift."



The Cottage was very pretty, with its yellow washed walls and purple slates, standing at the entrance of a small farm-yard.

A side door with a shallow porch led into a kitchen, the most comfortable place I ever saw in my life ; the floor was paved with square red tiles, which were always kept as bright and smooth as marble. Flitches of bacon and large hams hung from the ceiling. The recesses on each side of the chimney-place were painted black, and hung all over with pans and lids of saucepans, and ladles, and little brass trivets, which all shone as though they had been of gold and silver, although they were in reality only copper and pewter. A large oak settle was on one side of the fire-place, screening it from the draught of the door, and opposite to that was a wooden arm-chair, which was my grandfather's place, when he sat in the kitchen ; a short passage from the side door led into the hall, which was paved with red tiles, the same as the kitchen ; heavy mahogany tables, with long flapping leaves ; and large black chairs, garnished with brass nails, stood against the walls ; whilst some pictures of reaping and hay-making, hunting whips, great coats, and old hats hung up around. Beyond this hall was the parlour, a small stuffy little room, elevated by a single step—it was always warm, and always smelt of tobacco. There was one little window looking out upon the gar-

den, through which the light came as well as it could through the jasmines and roses which covered that side of the cottage, and which nobody ever thought of trimming. In this room my grandfather and grandmother used generally to sit, opposite to each other, with the fire-place between them—my grandmother in an elbow-chair, with a brocaded cushion much frayed with wear, a little table for her knitting, and her snuff-box, and a long snow-white pipe within her reach; opposite to her was my grandfather's three-cornered arm-chair, with its heavy circular back. At his elbow there was an oaken slab fixed to the wainscot to hold his plated tobacco-box, and at night his candle and tankard of ale. I never dared to touch any of these things, but looked on them with great awe and reverence. My grandfather and grandmother used to sit smoking opposite to each other for an hour together without speaking a word; and I used to sit on a little footstool beside the fire-place watching them, for they did not like me to talk or to move about.

The parlour looked into a large garden, which my grandmother said covered an acre of ground, and I believed it to be the very finest garden in the world. There was a large coach-wheel grass-plot just before the window, and a straight broad gravel walk beyond, which led up to an alcove that had a most august appearance, till one came

up to it and saw that the rain came through the roof, and made the walls green. Nobody took much pains with the garden; each side of the gravel walk was edged with a tall straggling border of box, which must have been the growth of many years; and all along the walk there were beautiful moss-rose bushes, pinks, and gillyflowers, and a curious sort of daisy, called the "Hen-and-chickens."

The rest of the garden was planted with fruit-trees, potatoes, and kitchen-stuff; and there was a hive of bees on a stone bench beside a bed of thyme, marjorum, and sweet herbs. The only small things, besides myself, at the Cottage, were a little shiny black and tan terrier called "Vick," and a fine tortoise-shell cat named "Charlotte." The dog's real name was "Vixen," called after its disposition, which was very cross and disagreeable. It liked to go softly behind people, and give them a bite whenever it had an opportunity. As to Charlotte she used to sleep all day, and at night go out to poach—lifting the little birds out of their nests. These were the only two companions I had, but they were not good playfellows, I suppose because they were old and fat.

I must have been a very little child, for I can only just remember this part of my life, and yet  
thing is fixed in my mind exactly as it ap-

peared to me then—looking back, it is as though I saw it through the small end of a telescope.

My grandfather was a stout man, with a bald grey head. I never thought him pleasant-looking. He used to wear a waistcoat with blue and yellow stripes, and grey worsted stockings up to the knee, and the rest of his clothes were snuff-coloured. My grandmother looked a very old lady, but her cheeks were as soft as a rose-leaf, and she had a delicate colour in her cheeks, which I thought very pretty. She used to wear a stiff dark silk gown, with a fine white hair-cord muslin apron, and a clear white handkerchief pinned over her neck. In the house, her cap was bound round her head by a broad striped ribbon; and when she went into the dairy or farm-yard, she wore a curious little black satin bonnet, lined with white sarsnet, and a tiny black feather on one side. She was somewhat lame from rheumatism, and had an ebony crutch-stick, to assist her in walking.

My grandfather used to drive every day round his farm in a yellow gig, drawn by a tall bay horse, and he often took me with him. I had always to get out to open the gates. I was rather afraid of getting in and out, for the gig was so high from the ground I could scarcely reach the step; but my grandfather only gave me a cut with his whip, and said I was good for nothing.

I do not think he much liked me, for he seldom spoke to me, except sometimes to tell me the kind of crops that were growing in the different fields, and was angry if I did not recollect them.

No visitors ever came to the Cottage, except sometimes my uncle and aunt in a post-chaise. My aunt was always very cross to me, and my grandmother used to send me into the kitchen, and bid the servant, Mary Rivers, keep me with her. My uncle used to talk very loud, and liked to tease me, by pretending to set his dog to bite me, or trying to make me fall down by putting out his foot. He wore yellow-topped boots with spurs in them, and they sometimes caught my frock and tore it, and then I got scolded, both by my grandmother and by Mary Rivers. I was afraid of my uncle, but I do not think he meant to be illnatured only he had a habit of swearing, which made him seem as if he were always in a passion. He once brought me a work-box from the fair, with a pair of scissors and a silver thimble in it; and my aunt said "he must have wanted something to do with his money when he bought it." She seemed as if she would have taken the box from me. My aunt was very ugly, and always looked cross and sour—at least I thought so. I did not like her at all, and kept out of her way. She used to slap my neck, 'till me "not to be forward," if she heard me

speaking or laughing; so I was glad she came very seldom. The only other visitors that came to the house were an old lady and gentleman named Butler, who lived in the village: the old gentleman was very old and very wizened; he wore a wig of short straight hair, with curls behind, which sometimes was put on awry. I heard Mary Rivers say that he was very rich and a miser. I did not know what a miser was, but it sounded something mysterious, and I was always afraid of him. He once made me a present of two sixpences, both of which turned out to be bad ones when I came to spend them, which was not until after I had hoarded them for a long time. His wife was a timid little woman, very good-natured, who spoke as if she were in a great hurry, and she was very much afraid "of putting Mr. B—— out of his way," as she called it. My grandfather and grandmother once went to drink tea with them, and I was taken too, which was a great event, though I had to sit still on a little footstool, and never speak all the time we staid; still it was a "visit," and I thought of it a great deal, and wished it were to come over again.

I must have been very lonely, though at the time I did not think of it, for I had no playfellows and no playthings; but as I had never had them I did not miss them; but what made me unhappy was that nobody seemed fond of me,

and I always had the feeling of being in the way. Sometimes my grandmother would put her arms round me and call me "her precious," if my grandfather were out of the house, but perhaps the very next day she would call me "poor little wretch," and say that I "should grow up to be a beggar in the street," and sometimes she would strike me across the shoulders with her stick, "to beat the black dog from me." My grandfather never seemed to like me, and sometimes he and my grandmother had great quarrels. All I could understand was that he reproached her for having made her daughter a fine lady, who had left her child to be a burden on the family, but that I should be sent to service as soon as I was old enough; and then he would look at me as if he he were angry; and then my grandmother would tell me to go to bed. I once asked Mary Rivers what my mother had done, and where she was, but she said little girls should not ask questions; and when I asked my grandmother whether I should ever see my mother, she answered me sharply, and said my mother had given me to her and my grandfather, and that I must be very thankful they had adopted me and not turned me out of doors.

I used to sleep in a little room at the end of a narrow inclined passage that led out of my grandmother's room, on a low bed with white curtains.

One night I awoke when they came up stairs to bed, and I heard my grandfather talking about me, saying that I should never be good for anything, but grow up as my mother had done before me, and that I should go to school, but it should be the cheapest that could be found, for that he would not spend his money for folks who would leave their child to be brought up on charity.

"And it is little of that you have got, Simon Morley," I heard my grandmother say, and her voice sounded as though she were crying.

The next morning when Mary Rivers came to fetch me down stairs to dress me, my grandfather bid her make me tie my own strings, for that I should not have a servant to wait on me; I could not dress myself, and stood crying in my nightgown on the oak settle in the kitchen until the ploughmen came in to breakfast, and then Mary Rivers came and carried me away in her arms to my grandmother, for she did not get up to breakfast, and my grandmother took me into bed to her, and when Mary Rivers brought the tray she gave me some of her nice warm tea and buttered toast, and when my grandfather was gone to the fields Mary Rivers came and dressed me; I remember she said that she thought master was going to have the gout, he was so queer-tempered? and my grandmother said according to that he might be having the gout every day of



the year, for he was never out of a queer temper of late. But Mary Rivers was right, for that very day my grandfather came home ill and was put to bed ; they could scarcely get him up stairs, and the doctor came, and there was a great bustle in the house ; and for many days I saw nobody but Mary Rivers. I did not sleep in my usual little bed, for I might not go near my grandfather's door, but I was put in what was called the best room, where there was a great four-post bed, the curtains were of chintz, covered with great hollyhocks and lined with yellow ; it was a long way from everybody, and I used to feel very much frightened, though I could not have told why. The moonlight used to come through a hole in the shutters cut in the form of a heart, and it made the room and the figures on the curtains look like ghosts and strange things. The daws had a nest in the chimney, and made noises that I thought were robbers, and if I heard the floor creak or the wind blowing out of doors, I used to hide my head under the clothes and lie trembling till I fell asleep. One night I awoke screaming violently, I must have had a dream, but when my grandmother and Mary Rivers came to see what was the matter they were very angry with me for wakening grandpapa, and my grandmother said if ever I did so again would take me by the leg and throw me out

of the window, and I felt very much ashamed of myself, and did not like to tell Mary Rivers that I was frightened. I do not know exactly how or when I learned to read; I do not remember being taught, I was very fond of reading though I had only three books, but I read them always without growing tired of them. They were a history of "Blue Beard," in verse, adorned with pictures, Mary Rivers gave it to me; the others were volumes of the "Parent's Assistant," by Miss Edgeworth, and I am sure they were more charming than any other stories I have ever read since. I used particularly to delight in the history of some orphans who went to live in a ruined castle, and an elder sister took care of them, and made shoes for them, and there was an old woman who was always digging under the walls for treasure. I have never read the story since, but in those days I knew it by heart.

My grandmother did not like to see me read; she said I should not be "bookish," and used to make me put my story down to learn to knit, which she said was something useful. So long as it was straight knitting I managed very prettily; but on the morning following the night when I had alarmed the house with screaming, my grandmother, who had put me in disgrace, called me to her, and said I must learn to knit a stocking. She cast on the needles, and explained what I

was to do. Whilst she was there to superintend the drawing out of each needle, and to keep the stitches close and even, I managed very well; and she had begun to praise me, and call me "her precious," when my grandfather's bell rang, and she was obliged to leave me, bidding me knit three more rows before I put down my task. Whether I grew careless, or whether I was tired, I do not know, but I recollect that somehow the knitting got into frightful disorder; stitches were dropped, leaving holes large enough for a finger to go through; but worse and more perplexing than all, was the phenomenon of all the stitches finding their way on to the same needle. What to do with the three empty knitting-needles lying on my lap puzzled me sadly. I had, however, done my three rows—better or worse—and hastily thrusting my perplexed knitting into the bag, I flew to the history of my beloved orphans, and began to speculate what I would do if I were an orphan, and lived in a ruined castle.

When my grandmother came down to dinner, her first inquiry was for my knitting. With many misgivings as to the result, I went slowly to fetch the bag. She smiled at me as she stretched out her hand to take it.

## CHAPTER II.

No sooner had my grandmother cast her eyes upon my ill-done work, than she gave me a sharp rap across the shoulders with her stick.

"Oh, you naughty, naughty girl," said she. "I was thinking I would forgive you for disturbing the house last night, and awakening your poor grandfather out of the first sleep he has enjoyed this week, and now when I had taken such pains to teach you to knit, and made all ready for you, the moment my back is turned you spoil it in this manner. You know you could have done it if you had chosen, for you had done it right once; but now I shall whip you and send you to bed without dinner. Here, Mary—Mary Rivers, bring me the rod that I may whip this naughty girl." Mary Rivers was out of hearing, but that did not help the case. "Go to her yourself, you naughty child, and ask her for the rod, and bring it to me; I warrant you shall know the smart of it. Go this moment when I bid you."

I departed, and returned with lingering feet, bearing my own punishment. This "rod" was a

a large bundle of birch twigs, bound together by a broad blue ribbon. It was kept hung up in the kitchen, to be always at hand for immediate use. When I reached my grandmother's chair, she first made me kiss the handle, and then she administered what she was accustomed to term "a good wholesome whipping," after which Mary Rivers carried me off to bed, where I sobbed myself to sleep, with a very confused notion of what I had done to be so very naughty, for somehow I did not feel that I was in any way worse than usual.

The next day was a day of misfortunes to me. I awoke quite determined to be a good girl, and by way of beginning with something superlatively good, I thought I would try to dress myself, and surprise Mary Rivers when she came for me. It was summer, and already quite light, although, if I had been less pre-occupied, I should have seen, by the red clouds, that the sun was yet scarcely risen. I got out of bed, and proceeded, with tolerable success, until, in attempting to pour out water into the basin, the heavy jug slipped from my hands, and fell with a noise that, in the silence, sounded terrible, breaking to pieces, and deluging the room, as well as myself, with its contents. I cannot pretend to describe my terror and despair, it was such a capital offence with my grandmother to break her crockery, that I did not dare to think what would become of me : the water was stream-

ing about the room, and was trickling out of the door sill. I stood, cold and sick with terror, looking at the mischief I had done, when the door opened, and my grandmother came in. She had heard the noise, and thinking I had fallen out of bed, came to see what was the matter. I fancy my agony of terror must have disarmed her;—at least her voice, when she said, “What have you been doing, miss?” seemed so light and mild, that it was an unspeakable deliverance from my previous sufferings.

Upon her repeating the question I told her how I had awoke with a wish to do something very good, and how I had tried to learn to dress myself.

Whether my whipping of the previous evening had satisfied her sense of justice, or whether she were touched by the good intention with which I had done all my mischief, I do not know, but she replied quite gently,—

“You certainly are a tiresome child, always in some mischief, but it is too early for you to get up yet; go to bed again whilst I send Mary Rivers to clear away all this mess.”

In all my life I have never felt so thankful as I did for this escape from unknown penalties. But the day thus disasterously commenced was not yet over. I went to bed and fell asleep until such time as Mary Rivers came to call me, and

she did not fail to make me a sermon upon, giddiness and love of mischief, but I was too happy to care about it.

After breakfast I took up my knitting, which my grandmother had unravelled and set to rights for me, and as she overlooked every round as it was finished, the lesson concluded quite prosperously, and I was highly praised and sent to keep Mary Rivers company. I went with her to the dairy, to watch her make a cheese, and did no mischief, except knocking down a pan of skim-milk and dropping the rennet into the wey-tub, for which she boxed my ears, to teach me, as she said, to "let things alone;" but she was not very cross with me. After that she took me with her to feed the pigs: that was always a great treat, and I stood watching them after Mary Rivers went away. I don't know what possessed me, but I could not resist pulling out the peg that fastened the door of the sty. I am sure I do not know why I did it, except that it looked as if it would come out easily. At first the pigs were too busy to notice the open door, and I was trying to shut it again, when one greedy old sow in pursuit of a potatoe which had rolled near the door-sill thrust her nose through the opening. I pushed against her with all my might, but she thrust the door open in spite of all I could do, and flung  
down in the black liquid mire around the sty,

and the whole troop rushed wildly and triumphantly across the yard, some into a neighbouring field, and one or two into the garden, the gate of which was unluckily open. I lay screaming where I had fallen, for one of the pigs had trodden on my hand, and a ploughman coming home to his dinner, picked me up and carried me in to Mary Rivers, begging her not to scold me. But I *was* scolded and whipped too, as soon as the pigs were driven out of the garden and penned once more in their sty. Instead of the nice currant pudding which Mary Rivers had made for dinner, I had a slice of dry bread, and was put to bed, as I had been the day before.

I do not know how it was, but without feeling naughty in the least, or intending to do wrong, I seemed to have fallen into the vein of mischief, and all the time of my grandfather's illness, nothing I did was right, and I was in tears and disgrace from morning till night. Charlotte, the old cat, scratched me, and Vick, the terrier, bit me, when I tried to play with them, and Mary Rivers said it was because they did not love naughty children.

I tried to be good very often, but I never could succeed, and I was always the worst when I tried the most to be good. I don't know why it is, but I have all through life remarked this to be the case.



My grandmother said that I used to be a good child, but that of late I had quite rubbed the gilt off my gingerbread, and that I was making her ill with my naughty tiresome ways, and that she should send me to school.

I began to cry, for I felt very sorry to have vexed my grandmother, and hurt that she should think I did not care for her. I told her so that night before I went to bed, and she kissed me, and seemed very fond of me, but said that I must go to school, because when my grandfather came down stairs, he would not be able to bear the noise I made. I had a very vague notion of what it would be to go to school; sometimes I thought it would be very pleasant to have play-fellows, and at other times I was terribly afraid of what I should meet with, for Mary Rivers would say—"Ah, you will not have all your time for play at school; your mistress will not let you laugh in that manner."—She made me little cakes when she baked, because she said I was going to school; and my grandmother allowed me to sit up once to supper, for the same reason, so I did not at all know what I had to expect.

At length my grandfather was able to come down stairs; he looked very pale, and much thinner than when I had last seen him. The sofa, which no one ever lay down upon, was brought from its usual place, and arranged with cloaks

and pillows, on the side of the fire-place, where my grandmother generally sat. He was laid upon it, and seemed quite exhausted with the journey from his own room. I felt rather sorry to see him come down stairs, for we had all been much more comfortable without him, and I think he guessed it, because he said sharply—"Well, miss, come and give me a kiss, and tell me you are glad I am well again." I said I should be very glad if he would not be cross, now that he was come back. My grandmother told me not to chatter, but to go into the kitchen to Mary Rivers.

That same afternoon I was reading about the orphans, and sitting on a footstool beside my grandmother, when Mary Rivers came to say that Mrs. Butler was come.

"Let her come in," said my grandfather.

A stout, elderly woman, in a purple bombazine dress, a white shawl, and a straw bonnet, covered all over with bows of white satin ribbon, entered, and curtsied at the door to my grandfather and grandmother.

"Well, Mrs. Butler, and so your daughter has set up to teach school," said my grandfather; "and pray what does she know?"

"She knows geography, and grammar, and reading. We shall have a master for writing and arithmetic. She can teach all manner of fancy work, chain-stitch, and satin-stitch, flower paint-

ing, and to cut out fire-grate papers. I undertake the plain sewing myself. We go to church twice on Sundays, and I hear them the catechism twice a week."

"Well, and what more?" said my grandfather, when the old lady paused to take breath.

"If any of the young ladies wish to learn music, Carry, Miss Butler that is, can teach them. She plays the 'Battle of Prague' in a way it would do you good to hear."

"And how much does she charge a week for all this?" asked my grandfather.

"My daughter charges four guineas a quarter for boarders, and a guinea for day scholars," replied the old lady, as if it were something grand.

"And quite enough too," said my grandfather, gruffly. "I am going to pay for no fal-lal nonsense. I want Clary bred up to get her own living, and if a woman knows how to read and write, and cast accounts, and do plain sewing, it is as much learning as will do her any good, so I want none of your flower painting, or satin-stitch, or Battle of Prague either, so as she is only to learn half what you teach, I shall only give you three guineas a quarter with her."

"But, sir,"—remonstrated Mrs. Butler.

"Take it, or leave it, just as you like," said my grandfather, "you will have no more from me."

And then he called my grandmother to raise him up and make his pillows comfortable.

"I hope you feed the children well, poor things," said my grandmother, speaking for the first time.

"Yes, ma'am, I give them plenty of good wholesome food—a pudding and a joint of meat, and sometimes, if I am baking, I cover over a few apples, or whatever fruit may be in season, to make a pie for them, by way of treat."

"I would keep them plainer than that—plainer than that," muttered my grandfather; "give them plenty of broth and porridge, quite good enough for them."

"I do not look to save in that way, sir; at their age they have good appetites, bless them, and I like to see them enjoy their meals."

"That is your own affair; do you take my offer or not? I shall not give you a farthing more."

After some further efforts to induce my grandfather to relent, the old lady finished by accepting his terms, although they were, as she said, very little. She rose to depart, leaning on her stick, for she was rather lame; but my grandmother made her stay to have a glass of currant wine and a piece of cake. She tried to make friends with me; but though I did not dislike her looks, I kept close by my grandmother's side, staring at her with all my might, for she did not look at all

like what I had expected. In fact, Mrs. Butler, as I afterwards learned, was the widow of a small farmer. Since her husband's death she had kept a small shop for green grocery, crockery, and multifarious articles; but she was especially celebrated for her gingerbread and tops; all the children adored her because she often gave them pieces of roach and barley-sugar into their bargain. She also sold little penny books, and when an urchin who could not buy, had spelled through as much of the story as lay open in the window, she would sometimes turn over the page that he might see what came next,—if she thought he had no money to buy it. She attended the market on Saturday, where she had a crockery stand, in which she drove a good trade. Without a particle of pride, or desiring any other station for herself, she sent her daughter to school, her ambition being that she should learn to be a lady and keep a school herself. So Carry Butler came back to be called Miss Butler, and to convert her mother's old shop into "a seminary for young ladies." Mrs. Butler did not give up her occupation without regret, but she felt proud of making the sacrifice for her daughter, and distributed gratis her remaining stock of sweetmeats and penny books amongst all the children in the town, which was an unintentional stroke of good policy, for it quite disarmed the jealousy that such a rise in genti-

lity might have excited amongst her neighbours. They even called Carry Miss Butler with a tolerable grace, and did *not* underrate her accomplishments because they had known her a little girl keeping market with her mother. Everybody wished her success, and she had the promise of several pupils.

I did not know all this until afterwards, but it comes properly in this place.

After Mrs. Butler had departed, my grandmother began to speak of getting me some new clothes ; but my grandfather began to groan so much, and was so cross, that she dropped the subject, for which I was very sorry, as I wanted to know what kind of a best frock I was to have.

My grandfather would not give my grandmother any money for me, saying that my aunt had promised to send some old things of her children's, which put my grandmother into a great passion ; and it came out that on the very day he was taken ill he had bought my little cousins beautiful scarlet coats, with beaver hats and feathers.

I remember crying when I went to bed that night, because I was to have old things, and had no hope of ever wearing a scarlet coat like my cousins ; and I thought it unjust they should have such beautiful things, and that I should have nothing. I was more miserable than even when

I had been sent to bed without supper, and yet, whilst I did not know of them, the scarlet coats had done me no harm, nor the hats with feathers in them either. I quite despised the dresses that Mary Rivers made up for me, and promised myself that I would soon wear them out, although they were far better than anything I had hitherto worn. At length the day came when I was to go to school. All my clothes were packed in a little hair trunk, and strapped behind the yellow gig. My grandfather gave me two large penny tokens for pocket money, and my grandmother had made a beautiful large plum cake. Mary Rivers gave me the story of Jack the Giant Killer and a pincushion; they both kissed me many times, and hid me be a good girl; after which, I was lifted into the gig, and one of the farm men drove me into the town, and set me down at Miss Butler's school.

## CHAPTER III.

MRS. BUTLER was standing with her arms leaning upon the half-door of what had been her shop, a large brick-floored apartment, but which now only retained a counter and a large empty bow-window, as marks of its origin. The farm servant lifted me down from the gig, and told Mrs. Butler that he had brought Miss Donnelly and her box to school. Mrs. Butler gave me a kiss, and said I was "a good little dear, and must not cry." This exhortation was needed; for, when I saw myself and my trunk standing in the street, and realized that the gig was to go home without me, I was seized with a panic, and began to cry bitterly.

"Poor little lass!" said the man; "she is beginning to face the world betimes: I don't wonder she feels lonesome. But she is well away from our house, for the master is more like a Turk than a Christian, now he is getting better."

Mrs. Butler had put her hand into her pocket during this speech, and now drew out a silver sixpence, which she gave the man. He touched



his hat, and drove off; and I felt as if all the world had turned its back upon me when Michael and the old yellow gig were out of sight.

Michael had always been very kind to me, and had often given me a ride up the fields when the horses came from the plough, or in the empty carts; and once he had given me a long string of beautiful birds'-eggs; but I did not know what a friend he had been until I came to part with him. My tears and sobs became more and more violent as I lost sight of him. It was, according to Mrs. Butler's old-fashioned notions, quite natural and proper for a child to cry on leaving home to come to school. She led me through the shop into the kitchen, and placing me on a little stool, allowed me to cry in peace, whilst she looked up a piece of gingerbread to comfort me, and tried to make me admire her large sleek cat, which lay upon the hearth. But it was the crying that comforted me more than anything else.

At length my tears ceased, and I began to coax the cat; and then she said I should go to the school-room, and take pussy with me. I followed up a steep staircase to a dark landing-place, where, throwing open a door, she ushered me into a moderately-sized room, with whitewashed walls. It was the middle of the morning school. A young lady with rosy cheeks and long curls, whom I thought very pretty, was sitting at a

small table, and half a dozen girls were standing in class before her ; others were sitting upon wooden forms near her ; and at the far end of the room there was a long desk, at which two or three girls were writing copies. Everybody left off their occupation to look at us. I grasped the old lady's hand very tight, and tried to hide myself in her gown.

"See Carry," said she, "what a nice little miss I have brought you ! she is come to learn lessons and be at school. This is Miss Donnelly, my dears, and I am sure you will all be very kind to her."

The young lady who sat at the table held out her hand to me, and said she was glad to see me ; this was Miss Butler. She wore a white gown and coral necklace, and I thought her very beautiful. She made me sit down beside her, and then said, in a clear loud tone,—

"Now, young ladies, attend to lessons, you shall make acquaintance with Miss Donnelly after school."

Old Mrs. Butler went away down stairs, and I sat and nursed the cat and watched with wonder all that went forwards. Mrs. Butler was a rough-tempered, uneducated old woman, exactly what was natural to her situation in life, but she had a good homely motherly heart, and I have often thought since, of her kindness to me on that day, and, indeed, all the time I was at school there ;

to be sure she would go into dreadful passions sometimes, and make us all feel the weight of her hand; but she was essentially kind and comfortable, and never let us go to bed with cold feet in winter, she petted us whenever we were ill, and made us sit in the chimney corner, and told us stories. She certainly did not look like a fine lady, but she had no pretensions, and neither then nor since did she ever strike me as being vulgar.

As soon as twelve o'clock struck, Miss Butler dismissed the day-scholars, locked the pens she had been mending in her drawer, and taking up a little basket of keys, she told the young ladies they might play until dinner-time, and desired the eldest among them to take charge of me, and to see that the others treated me well. As soon as the door closed upon her, a general spirit of rudeness seemed to possess my companions, strongly contrasting with their previous demure behaviour. One of them flung her copy book into the corner of the room; another tossed her work up to the ceiling; several began to jump upon the forms; but, the girl to whose protection I had been committed, seated herself in Miss Butler's chair, and called me up to her. She was a tall girl, with almost white hair, very rosy cheeks, and dressed in mourning; she seemed to me quite grown up, but she was only ten years old, and

tall for her age. She was the acknowledged head of the school, and by force or flattery, tyrannized over every one in it. At first, I did not stir, for I felt shy and frightened before all those girls.

"Come here, I say, little girl."

"Oh, go! do you not hear Annie Matley calling you? go, or she will pinch you," said a little girl about my own age, with great blue eyes that seemed made to cry with, and soft curling hair that was kept out of her eyes by a broad velvet ribbon tied round her head. Thus exhorted, I put down the cat and went up to Annie Matley; all the girls gathering round us.

"Another time you will come the first time you are called," said Miss Matley, giving me a little slap on the neck. She then proceeded to question me about my name and where I came from, and what I did when I was at home, and how many servants were kept. I honestly believed that the Cottage was the very grandest place in the world, and I described the house and the dairy, and the alcove and the garden, in terms that made me the envy of the listening circle. It was something quite new and delightful to be encouraged to talk. I went on and expatiated upon the raspberries and strawberries which I had heard my grandmother say were exceedingly fine, and concluded by promising that they should come and gather

as many as ever they chose. All my shyness had vanished, and I talked faster than ever I had done in my life, under the subtle charm of being encouraged to speak of myself. I boasted of everything I had either seen or heard of, and taking fire with my own eloquence, I began to insert several things that I thought would heighten the impression I had produced. I remember that amongst other things, I made myself out to be the possessor of the scarlet coat and beaver hat with feathers, which had cost me such pangs of envy.

I can only account for this sudden outburst of childish ostentation, by supposing that it must have been my natural disposition, which had not yet shewn itself, owing to the great subjection in which I had been held at home. I did not know that it was wrong to tell falsehoods; nobody had ever told me there were such things. I was carried away by the spirit of narration, which is at all times a dangerous gift. When I paused, Annie Matley looked rather disconcerted at the effect I had produced.

"I do not believe one word of what you have been saying," said she, after a pause, with a disdainful toss of her head; and I think you are a naughty story-telling little girl, to come here with such tales; but I have a 'conscience book' that will tell me if you have said the truth, and I shall ask it after dinner."

I felt my face go very red, and I was terribly frightened.

"For shame, Annie Matley! how can you say such things to frighten her," interposed the little girl who had first spoken to me. "Never mind her, Miss Donnelly, it will not be till the judgment day that there will be a book with our thoughts in it,—mamma told me so when I asked her, and she said it was wicked of Annie Matley to pretend about her conscience book."

I felt considerably reassured by this; and Annie Matley, to change the conversation, continued my examination, by asking if I had a doll.

Now I never in my life cared much about dolls, I always became tired of them in a very little while, but I was possessed of one which my grandmother had bought for me, and which Mary Rivers had dressed. It was a great solid wooden creature of a species now pretty nearly extinct, with little black beaded eyes, and woolly hair nailed to the head, and arranged in a festoon across the forehead, highly varnished bright red cheeks, and lath legs and arms—it would be thought nothing of now, but in those days it was considered a very handsome doll—so handsome indeed, that my grandmother considered it when dressed, to be too good for a child to play with, and kept it locked up in a drawer, and I was only allowed to look at it occasionally, but when it was decided

that I should come to school, my grandmother said I should have my doll, that I might hold up my head amongst my companions, and Mary Rivers going to a long red box, where she kept many things, that she would never let me look into, fetched out a necklace of yellow beads, which she clasped round the doll's neck, making me prouder and happier than ever I had been in my life. When therefore Annie Matley inquired whether I had a doll, it was a question I could answer proudly in the affirmative ; but the summons to dinner interrupted our chatter.

We rushed down the steep, winding stairs, at the risk of breaking our necks, and found Mrs. Butler and her daughter seated at each end of a long table, set out in the kitchen,—for indeed it served for “parlour, kitchen, and hall,”—as there was no other place except the empty shop. It was a good, wholesome meal, served in a rough, homely fashion ; the barm dumplings and treacle came before the meat, and the green hafted knives and forks were made like scimitars and pitchforks, and not very easy to manage ; we were not embarrassed by any polite restrictions, but allowed to eat our dinner in any way we chose. The food, as Mrs. Butler had promised, was good, and there was plenty of it, and we were all as hungry as young ravens. After dinner, we were despatched to play out of doors, in what would have been

a field, if any grass had grown in it. My magnificent descriptions of the morning had brought a little court about me, all eager for further revelations, and fond of novelty. Annie Matley saw herself deserted, and I was exceedingly uplifted by my unexpected importance. Everything combined to fill me with vanity, for Mrs. and Miss Butler, whether they wished to raise the glory of their school, or whether they were themselves deceived by idle gossip, I do not know, but old Mrs. Butler that afternoon told Jane the servant, that "Miss Donnelly was a real lady, bred and born, and would have no end of money when she grew up, for her grandfather, Mr. Morley, was rich, as everybody knew, and Mr. Donnelly, her father, had been sent out as governor of the gold islands on the coast of Africa!" this precious piece of gossip was accordingly retailed by Jane to one of her favourites, as she washed her hands and face, previous to re-appearing in afternoon school. Of course this information spread with additions and exaggerations amongst the rest of the girls, and I was regarded as nothing less than an Indian princess. When I heard the story I did not think it could be true, because my grandmother had often predicted that I should grow up a beggar in the streets, and my grandfather had often threatened to send me out to service. I knew my parents were abroad. My



grandmother had sometimes, though very seldom, spoken of my mother, but never of my father, and if he were such a grand person, it was strange ; however, I expressed no doubt upon the subject, but quietly adopted the story of the "gold islands," as well as the "jewel mine," that, by this time, had been added to it. I felt great pleasure in being found out to be so grand a person.

In the afternoon I was called up to read, and as all my shyness was now departed, I acquitted myself so as to obtain great praise. Miss Butler placed me at the head of the first class, and as this seemed only the proper place for a person of my supposed distinction, every one acquiesced in my promotion except Annie Matley, who tossed her head, and declared she did not believe a word about me, and that she would see I did not keep my place long ; but the little girl with blue eyes took hold of my hand, and said she was very glad. After evening school I was allowed to have my trunk unlocked, and all the girls came crowding round me to see what it contained. Cloth of gold was the least they expected, and its contents were, in reality, far inferior to their own wardrobes ; yet, with the imaginative faith of children, they forced themselves to believe that my poor little frocks, made out of my cousin's cast-off clothes, were indeed something very grand indeed. To be sure, there were a pair of slippers

with richly worked silver clasps ; the clasps had been my mother's when she was a little girl of my age, and my grandmother had taken them from a little japan box, saying to Mary Rivers, " These at least shall not go to dress up Mrs. Lemon's children, and thereupon she had fastened them into my new slippers, bidding me take care of them, for my mother's sake." These were the only traces of luxury in my whole possession, but they caused everything else to be accepted, and when my doll was drawn from the bottom of my trunk, she excited a cry of admiration. Certainly with her fine muslin dress, and brocaded green satin slip, to say nothing of her yellow necklace, she looked much more like an Indian princess than I did myself.

" I see nothing of the scarlet coat, nor of the grand hat and feathers you talked so much about," said Annie Matley. I was silent and somewhat confused.

" Perhaps your grandmamma did not like you to wear them at school," suggested the little girl with blue eyes, whose name was Mary Vaux.

I really do not think I should have said this for myself ; but I could not help agreeing to it when it was uttered for me. As I said before, no one had ever taught me that it was wrong to tell falsehoods. I had generally told the truth without thinking about it ; but to-day I seemed to have

found the faculty of saying things that were not true, and I remember well, feeling a confused sense of shame, without knowing why.

Besides my doll, there was a fine large cake at the bottom of my trunk, and a pot of strawberry jam, which last had been put there by my grandmother, to surprise me. With all these means to give them feasts, it may be guessed whether I did not become an immense favourite in the school. I took care, with my newly developed gift of boasting, to inform them that what I had was nothing to what I might have from home for the asking! I became a great favourite too with Miss Butler, because I learned my lessons quickly, and rather liked them. The lesson I especially delighted in was the poetry; and as I obtained great praise for repeating it well, I soon began to learn rather long pieces for my own pleasure, and to recite them with more emphasis than meaning, but which I had not the least doubt was very fine indeed. I recollect to this day one I used to be very fond of repeating: it began,—

“Lovely, lasting peace of mind,  
Sweet delight of human kind.”

I had not the least idea of what it meant, and of course nobody thought of explaining when I was not conscious of my ignorance. Things went on thus for what I suppose was about a month (chil-

dren keep no count of time), when one day, Miss Butler sent me with Annie Matley and two other of the girls to walk as far as the Cottage with a note to my grandmother. I had been always talking of the wonderful things I would do when they came to see me at home, and naturally they thought they were going to have them realized ; what they expected I do not know, certainly nothing less than an unlimited allowance of strawberries and cream, with a gold ring or a coral necklace a-piece; for I had so enlarged upon the beautiful things my grandmother kept in her jewel drawer, that no doubt they fancied they were going to see some old fairy, who would give them everything they wished for.

By the time we reached the green gate at the top of the Foredrift, I began to feel terribly afraid that my grandmother would be angry at seeing any one come with me, without her leave first obtained. As we proceeded a panic seized me. I did not know what to do with my companions, nor how the least in the world to keep all the fine promises I had made. As we drew near the Cottage, I exaggerated to myself my grandmother's quick, sharp speech, my grandfather's ill temper, and, above all, how Mary Rivers would scold us all for coming in with dirty shoes !

When we arrived I tapped timidly at the door; I suppose my companions felt some of my awe,

for little Mary Vaux said, "Shall we wait here for you?"

"Yes," said I, "for I dare not take you in to my grandmother, until she gives me leave;" and pushing open the door, which was ajar, I left them without ceremony.

My grandmother was confined to her arm-chair by an attack of rheumatism. She was very glad to see me, and I began to chatter to her until I quite forgot my companions at the door—or rather I could not find an opportunity to ask my grandmother if they might come in. I remained chatting till at last she said it was quite time I should go. She ordered Mary Rivers to put up a guinea-fowl, and a pat of butter in a basket for Mrs. Butler, and she gave me gingerbread and some preserve puffs, but she hurried me, that I might be gone before my grandfather came from the field, as she did not want him to see me.

When I reached the porch I only found little Mary Vaux, who was waiting for me and crying. She said a cross old gentleman had been, and asked them what they wanted, and bid them be off directly. As she spoke I heard my grandfather's voice coming from the stables—it sounded as if he were in a passion. "Oh, come away!" cried I, "let us make haste;" and taking hold of her hand, we began to run, but Vick, the cross dog, had forgotten me, and came out of the house

barking at us. He caught hold of little Mary's frock, and frightened her so much that she fell down. Mary Rivers came out on hearing us scream, and drove him back, but not until the poor child's frock had been torn, and her elbow hurt with the fall, besides her bonnet, which was crushed out of all shape.

When we reached the green gate we found the other two girls waiting for us. I was very sorry for what had happened, and gave them all my puffs, to make up for it, without keeping one for myself. They eat them up without saying anything, but as soon as we reached home, Annie Matley went straight to Miss Butler and told her how ill I had treated them, and made Mary Vaux shew her frock, and said that I had pushed her down on purpose. Mary Vaux tried to stand my friend, and made excuses for me, but Miss Butler would not listen. She asked me who I was, to insult my companions who were better than myself; in short she was very angry. I had to dine on bread and water, and was sent to bed without any tea, and the next day I had to make an apology and ask pardon of the three girls, who had been my companions; but only Mary Vaux forgave me—the others were very spiteful, and made all the girls dislike me, and refuse to play with me, and Annie Matley told tales of me to Miss Butler that were not true, and Miss Butler be-

came more cross to me every day, no matter how well I tried to do my lessons.

At last Annie Matley said she would be friends with me if I would give her my doll's yellow necklace, which she had tried to beg ever since she had first seen it ; and when I refused, because Mary Rivers had told me not to part with it, she declared that she would "compel me to give it to her ;" and I remember thinking there was some charm in the word, to take it away in spite of me ; however I tried still to resist ; but she was much stronger than myself ; and as I slept with her she pinched me and tormented me until I consented to give it up to be let alone. I was ashamed to do it, but she hurt me more than I could bear.

I do not know how long I remained at school. I never was made so much of again as I had been at first, and we all somehow fell into subjection to Annie Matley, who was a favourite with Miss Butler, and made us do just what she liked, and give her whatever she asked for. Only Mary Vaux was always good to me, and we sat together and played with each other out of school-time, when Annie Matley did not hinder us.

One day a servant came down from my grandmother to say that I must pack up my trunk come with him, for my MOTHER had night before !

## CHAPTER IV.

MY mother!—I was then to see my own mother, whom I had thought of so often, and longed for with my whole heart ;—about whom I had dreamed at night, and awoke stretching out my arms in bed to find her, and then cried bitterly to find that I had only fancied it in my sleep. I cannot express the vague and sorrowful longing for my mother which lay at the bottom of my life. When my grandmother, or Mary Rivers were very good to me, and caressed me, it used to seem as if I had found her ; but it only lasted a little while, for they never let me love them with all my heart.

The flood of joy nearly took away my breath, when I heard that my mother was come. I think I must have fainted, for I recollect nothing else until I found myself lying on Mrs. Butler's own bed. She was rubbing my temples with some sharp spirit, and I was quite wet with water that had been sprinkled over me. When I looked round and saw nobody but Mrs. Butler, I began to cry, thinking I had only been dream-



ing again. Mrs. Butler spoke very kindly to me. She bid me lie still, and said that I should go and see my mother directly. I went on crying, however, not because I was miserable, but because I could not help it, and Mrs. Butler did not try to stop me. I suppose I fell asleep. When I awoke it was afternoon, but I was quite well, and very impatient to be gone; but as my grandmother's servant had returned long since, I had to wait until Mrs. Butler was at leisure to take me. I do not think she intended to try my patience, but she would have thought it highly indecorous to appear before company, except in her very best dress and bonnet. I was permitted to sit in the room whilst she dressed, and I never shall forget the desperately leisurely manner in which every article was put on. I am sure her white muslin neckerchief was pinned and unpinned half a dozen times before she was satisfied with it. At last, when I thought she was quite ready, her shoe-tie broke, and she was full a quarter of an hour in finding her store of black galloon to replace it. Ever since, I have regretted the loss of that day; it was so much taken away from the brief and precious period of my life which I passed under the shadow of my mother, and even now there are times when I weep with mad regret to think, that I might have had seven more hours with her, which were wasted. At length

Mrs. Butler was ready, and then it appeared that I had to be dressed also!—a fact that had never occurred to me. Mrs. Butler was very anxious that I should look nice, and do her credit in the eyes of those who were to see me. My best pink gingham frock and frilled white trousers, which usually filled my heart with vanity, now seemed odious. A gipsy chip hat, tied with a broad pink ribbon, white tippet and sleeves, and my kid shoes fastened with my dear mother's own silver clasps, completed my attire, and we at length set off,—Mrs. Butler only once turning back, when we reached the street, to bid Jane be sure to have the kettle boiling for tea.

When we arrived at the Cottage, a post-chaise splashed all over with mud stood at the door. Mary Rivers was in the kitchen, making some arrow-root. She spoke very kindly to me, and said that my mother had asked for me many times; but she bid us sit down with her until the doctor went away. She said it was the famous Dr. Maccallum, whom people came from all parts of the country to consult, and my mother was so ill that my grandfather had taken a chaise, and gone himself to fetch him that morning. Mrs. Butler enquired when my mother arrived, for I could not speak a word, and Mary Rivers said late the evening before. A week ago, a ship-letter had come to my grandfather, which was from my

mother, and it had made them all cry very much, for Mary Rivers had heard it read, and the next day my grandfather and grandmother had set off for Bristol, and brought my mother back by easy stages. Then Mary Rivers took the arrow-root off the fire, and began to talk in a low voice to Mrs. Butler, not so low, however, but what I could hear much of what they said. Mary Rivers told Mrs. Butler that my grandfather had never taken kindly to me, because he thought my mother had done very wrong in leaving me to go out to Africa, and he fancied it was because she had no natural affection, and that he had been set against me by Mrs. Lemon, who wanted to get everything for herself and her own children; but that since my mother had written to him and was come back so changed and ill, he had become quite softened towards her, and that no doubt now I should come in for her share of his money. Mary Rivers said a great deal about my father's ill conduct, and that my mother had been made very unhappy by him. I do not think she intended me to hear all this, for she bid me go and see if the horses were eating their corn; but just then the parlour-door opened, and the doctor came out, followed by my grandmother. I heard the doctor say in reply to her, "There is no disease, my dear madam, and we must do the best: she is very weak, and must be

kept as quiet as possible. I will see her again in a few days." My grandmother said something—I know it was about me—for the doctor replied, "By all means, let her little girl be with her constantly; in my opinion it is pining after that child which has done half the mischief. Sorrow and anxiety have done her more harm than the climate of Africa; but now she is come back we must do our best to set her up again—and do you, my dear madam, keep your spirits; there must be no depressing influences—a cheerful element will do more for her than all my medicines."

"I wonder the child is not here long ago," said my grandmother; she looked into the kitchen as she spoke, and I ran up to her and kissed her, whilst Mrs. Butler stood up and curtsied. The doctor patted my head, and bid me be a good girl, and then he would soon make my mother quite well, but that I must be very quiet, and do whatever I was bid. The doctor was a stout man, dressed in a blue coat and buff waistcoat, he had a square red face, which overhung his neckcloth, and quite white hair. I looked at him with great reverence, because I believed he could make any one he chose quite well.

My grandmother put something into the doctor's hand, which he slipped into his waistcoat pocket as he stepped into the chaise, which he ordered to drive very fast. My grandmother sighed heavily,

and I saw the tears running down her cheeks ; she held my hand very tight, and went with me into the kitchen, where she sat down for a moment, and desired Mary Rivers to give Mrs. Butler some cake and wine, and told her that I should not go back to school again at present,—not until my mother was better.—I felt very glad indeed to hear this, and gave a little jump ; Mrs. Butler shook her head, and said,—

“ Ah, poor lamb, she little knows what she is jumping for ! ” and that frightened me and made me very miserable, and I was afraid they were not going to let me see my mother ; but my grandmother, who was now quite calm, rose and, wishing Mrs. Butler good-bye, took me with her out of the kitchen. At the parlour-door she gave my hand another squeeze, and said,—“ My child be very quiet,” and pushed me in before her. I trembled so much, I could scarcely stand ; I saw a lady lying on the sofa in a long white dressing-gown, she watching the door. “ Oh, mamma, mamma ! ” I cried, and fell into her arms, which were stretched out for me, I felt her heart beating, I put my arms round her neck with all my strength, and she held me so tight that I seemed to grow to her ; she never spoke, but we were both crying very much. Oh how different it was to have her hands touching me, to those of anybody else. She lifted me up beside her on

the sofa, and I hid my face in her neck and held her fast, for I was afraid of letting her go.

I do not know how long we were thus, but at last I heard my grandmother say, "Gertrude, Gertrude, this agitation will kill you."

"Oh, no, no," replied mamma, "this is the first happy moment I have had since I left you."

She lifted up my head, and put me a little distance from her to look at me, but I nestled down again close beside her, for I only wished to feel close to her, and not to look up or see anybody. Although so many years have passed since that day, I recollect everything even more distinctly than I observed them at the moment, and even whilst writing this, her presence comes before me as vividly as if she were again stretching out her arms for me; and I sicken with the vain yearning to be clasped in them; and hide my head in her bosom, as I did on that day when I saw her for the first time. Oh, how very happy are those who have mothers who are not taken away from them, as mine was.

However, my grandmother did not leave us together again. She brought the arrow-root that Mary Rivers had made, and lifted up my mother, and persuaded her to take it as if she had been a little child like myself; and my mother did every thing just as she was told, only she would not let me move from beside her. When I look-

ed at my mother as she was eating her arrow-root, I thought her very beautiful, quite different from any person I had ever seen. She was very tall, and her face was pale and thin, with a delicate rose colour on the cheeks ; her eyes were large and dark blue, and her hair looked like strings of gold ; but it was not her features that impressed me so much, as an indescribable softness and refinement which made her seem to me like a superior being. My grandmother watched every look and motion, and spoke as gently to her as mamma did to me. It seemed as if the house were already changed by having mamma in it ; everybody seemed to have become kinder and gentler, and even my grandfather, when he came in, gave me a kiss, and spoke to me quite kindly, as if he had been glad to see me.

As soon as my grandfather came into the parlour, mamma sat up and tried to seem quite well, and talked cheerfully and pleasantly to him, and he seemed in a very good temper, and my grandmother sat by, looking very happy indeed. When Mary Rivers came to take me to bed, my grandfather asked whether, "Miss might not sit up to supper for once in her life," which was what he had never done before ; indeed, when he was in a half sort of good temper, he had been accustomed to tease me at bed-time, by saying to Mary Rivers, "Put the child to bed and the goose to the fire ;"

so that I used to fancy the time that passed down stairs after my departure was quite of a different nature to the rest of the day, during which all kinds of mysterious and delightful events took place.

Mamma was not allowed to sit up late, she went to bed when I did. I fell asleep and dreamed of all that had happened during the day, and in the morning I awoke and found them all true.

Mamma made me tell her everything I had done before she came to me, which I did, and particularly enquired about the gold mine on the coast of Africa. She laughed a little at first when she heard this, but then she looked sad, and said, no, my little girl, there were no gold islands, nor was your papa a governor at all; we went to Africa because we were poor, and owed a great deal of money. When I get well I shall have to work to earn money, but I will never leave you again,—when you are older, I will tell you everything,—but do not ask me any questions now.

“And may I work, too, mamma?”

“Yes, my darling, I hope you will.”

I pondered a long time upon what mamma had said, and, young as I was, I felt a shadow of some unknown sorrow and anxiety fall upon me; but mamma was not to go away again, and I could not be afraid of anything else. I said my lessons to



her every day, and when I repeated all my poetry to her, she made me repeat it gently and simply, and explained it to me. All the good I have gained since, I owe to this period which I spent with my mother, all I know dates from this time; it seems as if she sowed seeds of all I have learned or done since.

My mother soon began to recover her health. She used to get up early in the morning to go into the fields with my grandfather, who made her ride after the plough, which he declared was better than all the doctor's prescriptions. Whether it was that, or the new milk from the cow, or going about in the dairy with Mary Rivers, and assisting her, that did her good, I do not know, but before long she grew quite plump and well. My grandmother did not like to see her do anything; but she never would be idle for a minute, and was always very attentive to my grandfather, which kept him good tempered in a wonderful manner. My grandmother left off sighing and looking miserable at me, and never said I should grow up to be a beggar in the streets. Mary Rivers often said that my mother's coming home was a blessing to the house; and I never got into disgrace or was whipped. I think my mother kept me from being naughty. All that year until after Christmas, was the happiest time I have ever known.

## CHAPTER V.

It must not be supposed that, child as I was at this time, I could understand all that went on before my eyes ; but to make my story intelligible, I am obliged now to write it with the knowledge that I obtained in after years.

Whilst we were all so happy and comfortable together, a letter came one day to my mother. She turned pale as the old postman put it into her hands, and went hastily up stairs into her own room.

"That comes from her good-for-nothing husband," said my grandmother to Mary Rivers ; "it is little he cares whether she is alive or dead, he only wants money ; but I would sooner cut off my right hand than that she should live with him again."

"Ah !" said Mary Rivers, "it was an unlucky day for her when she saw him."

They suddenly perceived that I was close to them, listening eagerly ; they looked at each other and ceased to speak, leaving me very puzzled, and above all things, anxious about my mother.

When she came down stairs, I could see that she had been crying, but she looked quite calm.

That afternoon, when she and my grandmother were alone, they began to talk. I was playing in a corner of the room, and they thought I was paying no attention.

"You have had a letter this morning from your husband, and what does he say?"

"That the climate does not agree with his health—that he is tired of the place, and intends to come home."

"And what will he do? or, rather, what does he expect? for he has never done any good, and never will. Oh, Gertrude, how happy we might have been if you had never seen that man! What will your father say!"

"If I had only injured myself," said my mother, sadly, "I could bear the consequences; but I have brought evil on all belonging to me. I deserve all, and more than all I have suffered. He shall not come here to annoy you and my father. Old Lady Southend has promised to find me as much work as I can do, if I will settle in London. It is to embroider ladies' robes and ball dresses; it is the only thing I can do well; and as I can design my own patterns, I shall be well paid. I would not tell you whilst I was uncertain;—there was no need to harass you."

My grandmother began to cry, and said my

mother was cruel and unnatural to speak of leaving her ; but my mother talked to her and comforted her, and insisted upon it that she would go to London, because if she remained at the Cottage, Mr. Donnelly would be sure to come and want to live there too, or else to go to Mrs. Simon Morley's. My mother seemed to have such a dread of this last alternative, that she finished by obtaining my grandmother's consent, though she cried very much, and said it would break her heart.

What passed after I went to bed that night I do not know. My grandfather was very grim and silent at breakfast the next morning. My grandmother was wiping her eyes all the time we were at table. My mother looked very pale, but nobody spoke until we rose from table, when my grandfather, turning round from the door, said—

“And when do you count to go?”

“The day after to-morrow,” replied my mother, making haste out of the room, for she was afraid to look at my grandmother. “Oh, Simon Morley! can you let her go in this way? Why will you not say a word to keep her?” cried my grandmother, sobbing.

“I will tell you what it is, mistress,” said my grandfather. “Gertrude and the child are welcome to stop here for ever ; but I will have

none of her husband : and so long as she is here he will come. She took him, and she must have him, for so long as he is her husband, he has a right to be with her, and we cannot help it. I am glad to see that Gertrude has the spirit not to like to be dependent, but to do something for herself."

"Simon Morley, you are rich ; you have more money than you will spend if you live for sixty years, and do nothing else but spend. Why should you not give your own daughter enough to live upon ? You would never feel it."

"If I keep Gertrude, I must keep her husband too ;—and I wont. I did not work hard for my money to spend it on such a wastrel."

My grandmother sighed ; there was nothing more to be said ; and two days afterwards, my mother and myself went inside the day coach to London. The coachman, who knew my grandfather, and recollected my mother ever since she was a girl, came to us after he had delivered his way-bill, to see us safe to our lodgings, for my mother had arranged everything beforehand. She gave him the address, and the old jingling hackney coach drove us up and down complicated nests of streets, till at length it pulled up before a steep house in a very quiet, little, out-of-the-way place ; a street lamp was luckily posted before the door, and shed a dull spark of smoky

light; for in those days there was no gas—nothing but train oil.

“Well,” said Sam, the fat stage coachman, “I hope we are arrived all right. I would drive a stage coach with any man, but I could not work my way no road through such places as these.”

I was cold and tired, and had fallen asleep. My mother carried me into the house, up-stairs into a sitting-room, where a pleasant fire was burning, and laid me down upon a soft, old-fashioned sofa. Everything made a dreamy impression upon me, though I was too sleepy to wake up to attend to it. I recollect my mother giving me some tea, and then carrying me into the bedroom, which opened out of the sitting-room, and putting me gently to bed, without awakening me, or disturbing me. I have often been tired since, but never again have I enjoyed such a luxurious ending to my fatigue.

In the morning, when I awoke, the door betwixt the two rooms was open, and I could see my mother sitting beside the window, working at a square of something white in a frame, which she was embroidering with coloured silks. I did not feel disposed to stir, so I lay still, looking about me. The two rooms were very small, but comfortable, and full of old-fashioned furniture of dark walnut wood. The walls were covered with

plain blue paper, and hung round with oval, pink-tinted prints, representing scenes in Pamela, and Clarissa Harlowe; a larger print over the mantle-piece was of Mrs. Bellamy, as the "Grecian Daughter." The curtains of the bed, and of the windows in both rooms, as well as the sofa-cover, were of old-fashioned print, all over immense, straggling flowers of no particular genus, and resembling nothing I ever saw in a garden; it was very clean but faded, the colours had run sadly out of one flower into another. The sun was shining clear and sharp into the window, and a little bird was singing with shrill glee. I lay scarcely knowing where I was, until my mother came to see if I were awake. After I was dressed she let me help her straighten the room, but she had no time to play with me; so after admiring her beautiful work, I had to amuse myself with unpacking my doll and my books, and looking at the bird, which was a fine, bright canary, and never tired of singing. I looked out of the window, but could not see much—it was scarcely a street, but a quiet, very quiet little nook: it lay somewhere near Gray's-inn-road. It was not a thoroughfare, and at the end there was a wall, over which we could see the tops of some trees, which in summer looked very pleasant. The houses were large, and had at some time or other been handsome, but now they looked very dark

and dingy, except the one where we lived, which had a much more cheerful appearance than the others. There was no noise, and the grass grew between the stones in the middle of the street. Mamma sat working all the time it was light, only she took me out for about half-an-hour to walk with her in an open place, laid out something like a garden, and when we came in, she worked again, but she played with me and told me tales for a little time before she put me to bed. Many days passed in this manner, and if it had not been for being always with mamma, I should have felt very dull; but so long as I was with her I cared for nothing else. She used to teach me lessons whilst she worked, and I read to her. She liked the story of the orphans as much as I did. She tried to teach me to make clothes for my doll, and I liked to work with her.

One day she put on my best bonnet, and said that we were going for a long walk. She made the work she had been busy with into a parcel, and we set off. It was a very long walk, but I was so much delighted with the beautiful shops and all the people we met, that I was not at all tired.

Mamma knocked at the door of a fine house in Piccadilly: a tall footman opened the door, and we were left to wait in the hall until a message came, desiring us to go up-stairs. We were shewn



through many rooms and passages, until at last we were ushered into a small sitting-room, hung round with family portraits. Within the shelter of an Indian window-screen, which stood between the door and the fire-place, sat a very stately old lady: her grey hair was combed off her face and gathered under a cap of rich point lace, with a band of lace under her chin. She was dressed in black satin, made low and square in the body, with a white lace handkerchief and tucker, arranged in many folds over neck and bosom. She looked like some of the pictures I have seen of Mrs. Siddons. She was reading "The Whole Duty of Man," but closed her book when we entered, and holding out her hand to my mother, said she was glad to see her, and was sorry she had been detained down stairs, but that she had given the footman orders for the future, to admit her at once. This was Lady Southend.

She looked at me, and said, "What! is this my little god-daughter?" and kissed me and made me sit down on her footstool, whilst she bid my mother sit opposite to her on the sofa. I felt glad to be in this room, everything was so beautiful, and I looked about at everything, whilst the old lady and my mother were talking together; but after a while I began to listen to what they said.

"Well, my dear, I think you are now doing

exactly what you ought to have done at first. Bring up your child to earn her own living, and keep foolish notions out of her head."

"I only regret not being able to afford her a good education," said my mother.

"The best possible education she can have, will be to learn to avoid the mistakes you have committed—to respect herself too much to desire a false position—and, above all things, to desire to be true and honest; she may then do with very little book learning."

"Oh, Lady Southend, if you only knew what I suffer at the dread of leaving her dependent upon her relations; it is more than I can endure. My father has been very kind to me, but he cares for money before all other things; he has pretty well forgiven my disobedience, but he cannot forgive the poverty of my imprudence. It is no longer the station in life of my own family of which I am now ashamed, either for myself or for my child, but it is their vulgar worldliness to which I dread to consign her. Money is the only thing they believe in—they respect nothing in the world besides.

"What my husband's relations are, you know; there is nothing genial or generous about them; in their reverence for birth and family they have less humanity than the wild cat rampant on their crest; and to think that my child must one day

be dependent upon one set or the other is more than I can bear. If I could only hope to live long enough to instil into her some of the principles which I have bought so dearly, I should have more fortitude, but I know my life is precarious."

"Why did you leave her to go abroad, instead of stopping and taking care of her?"

"Do you think I have not long ago seen how wrong I was?" said my mother, vehemently; "I have repented bitterly since the day I left England; but, Lady Southend, you never were dependent upon relatives—upon a harsh sister-in-law. You do not know what it is. My husband would not allow me to work; but there is no excuse for me; I was impatient to deliver myself, and now my punishment is recommencing; and it is my child upon whom it will fall the heaviest. It seems unjust that what in the beginning was only an imprudence, should have such a long continuance of bitter fruits."

"My dear Mrs. Donnelly," said the old lady, taking a pinch of snuff, "common sense is the only virtue in this world that brings its own reward with it. You certainly have done many admirable things, and submitted, on the whole, meekly enough to the consequences of your own conduct; but that does not undo the sin of being ashamed of your parents and their station in life, the mad mistake of marrying a man you

knew nothing about, and cared for as little, for the sake of getting away from home, and the hope of entering a somewhat higher grade of society. What has happened to you is only the natural result of your own conduct. Impatience has been your bane; twice you have forsaken the place appointed to you, each time to escape from what seemed to you intolerable hardship. Each time you have made your position worse, as all persons do who forsake their appointed duties; and no other virtue can be a substitute for a plain and palpable duty. You have come to your senses, and are a very estimable woman; but you have made two fatal mistakes, and must now bear the consequences to the end."

"Only tell me what to do," said my mother.

"All you can do is to train your child to avoid your own errors. She must re-enter the station you quitted. She need neither be sordid, like her rich relations, nor pretentious like her poor ones: teach her to be true and patient, anxious only to do her duty in the state of life to which she is called, and you need not be anxious about the result."

"And in the meantime it will be my child who suffers for my faults," replied my mother.

"Not altogether; her own character will greatly modify her lot in life. Children are not automata, predestined to carry out the extreme logical

consequences of the faults of others. Nothing in this world is either so bad or so good as it ought to be, from logical deduction. So take courage; for, with the blessing of Providence, little missy may make her lot both honourable and comfortable. It is a great advantage that you have her all to yourself. So long as you are spared to her, she is not much to be pitied."

My mother wiped her eyes.

"You have comforted me very much, Lady Southend," said she, "and have given me strength to go on."

"Well, my dear, pray to God, and he will help you. And now let me see the work you have brought."

My mother unfolded the parcel. It was a beautiful scarf, embroidered all over in brilliant colours, heightened with gold and silver threads.

"This is indeed superb!" cried the old lady, examining it through her glass; "the design does credit to your taste and skill. It is equal to any Indian shawl I ever saw. I told you I intended it as a present to my daughter-in-law elect. Southend is going to take a wife at last, and I am content with his choice. But I have more work for you. I want a large folding screen of four leaves,—some sort of a Japan or Oriental design;—use your own taste,—I leave it entirely to you. But the ground must be black

satin. It is all measured and cut off for you, ready to take home. Only go on as you have begun, and you shall have as much work as you can do, and command your own prices. Only recollect we must have no airs of a decayed gentlewoman, who never expected to turn her accomplishments to account. You are a respectable young woman, who have entered into business to support yourself and your child."

"I hope you will not be plagued with any folly on my part," said my mother, smiling.

"Well, well, you are a good child on the whole," said the old lady, patting her shoulder, "and I am content with you. Do you find your rooms comfortable, and have you all you want in the way of furniture?"

"Nothing could be better, and I am deeply indebted for your ladyship's kindness."

"Ah, I told you I would help you when you wanted to work, and I am glad I am alive to keep my word. I have made the rent all straight for the first quarter. I wish you to get a little beforehand with the world, and then you will do well, never fear. And now, little miss," said she, turning to me, "tell me how you like being in London?"

I said I liked being anywhere with mamma, and that I would learn to help her to work.

The old lady smiled, and putting her hand in

her pocket, pulled out a beautiful satin huswife worked in beads, with scissors, bodkin, and all complete, in a silver sheath. "There," said she, putting it into my hand, "that is to teach you to be a tidy little girl, and to learn to work well. If your mamma says you are very good, you shall come some day to see me, and I will shew you some pretty things."

I was never very bashful, so I told her that I should be very glad to come. She made my mother have a glass of Madeira after her walk, and sent her home in a coach, as we had the satin for the screen to take with us. As we were going away she gave me a little muff to keep my hands warm, of which I was very proud indeed.

## CHAPTER VI.

SEVERAL weeks passed after our visit to Lady Southend, without the occurrence of anything remarkable. The days became longer, and my mother rose earlier in proportion, to get on with her work, and to have a little more time to devote to me during the day. I led a very happy life, being constantly with my mother, who studied my temper and disposition, and endeavoured in every way to please me. I was not tempted to be naughty or to fall into mischief, and I did not fail to take the result of my mother's wise management for my own goodness. I have often smiled since, to think of the "royal road" to perfection which I imagined had been opened.

One day, I well remember, I had been sitting beside her, busily engaged in making a doll's mantle, and, after several trials, I had at length succeeded in producing a tolerable result.

"I am pleased with my little girl to-day," said my mother, kissing me; "the mantle is very pretty, and she has been very patient; it is neatly made, and I am glad to see that you have per-



severance, which means finishing what you begin in spite of difficulties."

I felt very glad, and very proud to be thus praised by my mother, and my spirits rose. I chattered and laughed beyond all measure, and danced about the room until I threw down mamma's work-box, upset the canary's cage, and spilled all the water, besides frightening the poor bird so much, that he sat with ruffled feathers at the end of his perch, and sulked for the rest of the day. Mamma told me that I made her head ache, and asked me to come and read my new book to her. It was a volume of "Evenings at Home," which I liked very well, but not so much as my dear old "Parent's Assistant," with its tales of the "Orphans," and "Lazy Lawrence." I did as she bade me, and read quietly for a short time, and then I fell to musing. Mamma did not interrupt me; I think she was glad to be quiet.

"Do you know, mamma," said I, at last, "I have been thinking how very good I am become since I lived with you. I am never naughty now, and you never scold me: it is not at all hard to be good, and I am much happier than when I lived with grandmamma at the Cottage, and I never tell falsehoods now, do I, mamma?"

"My little girl is boastful to-day," said mamma, "we do not know how she would be were tried, but it is not wise to talk

of ourselves ; it is so pleasant, that we forget to take care, and then we always make some mistake, and do something we ought not. Since you came here you have had no companions to tease you, and no temptation to tell boastful stories to make them think you grander than you are. I must see whether you can resist temptation, before I know whether you are improved ; but we will not think any more of ourselves at present."

I was considerably more quiet and silent for the remainder of the day, but I was building castles in the air, and thinking of all I would say and do if I were once more amongst the girls at Mrs. Butler's school. It was, as mamma said, very pleasant to think and speak of myself.

That night, after I was in bed, I was awoke by hearing loud voices down stairs, and a great trampling of feet, and soon afterwards a tall, brown man, in a rough great coat, came into the sitting-room, and said,—

" Well, Ger., here I am at last ! Did you think me lost ?"

Mamma looked very much hurried, almost frightened. The servant of the house came to the door, and said the coachman wanted his money.

" Ah, yes," said the tall man ; " pay him, Ger., I don't know how much it is ; of course he will *overcharge* you. But he has brought me from the Custom House, and I have not sixpence left."

He flung himself upon the sofa, and seemed quite at home.

Mamma gave the servant some money, and then came to me, and took me up, saying,—

“Come, little girl—come and see your papa.”

I did not feel at all glad to see him ; he had made the room uncomfortable already. He hugged me very much, and hurt my cheeks with his rough beard ; and then his great chest came up stairs, and filled the room completely up. I thought him very ugly, and tried to get down off his knee.

“Why, what a shy, frightened little thing she is !” said my father.

“She is awakened out of her first sleep,” replied my mother ; “you will be better friends to-morrow.”

My mother was busy making up a little bed for me in a corner of the room, and I did not feel at all glad my father was come home. The next day, however, when he was shaved and dressed, I liked him better. He played with me, and talked to me, and I thought him a very funny, good-natured gentleman.

It was a beautiful day, and papa said he would go out to take a stroll, and that I should go with him. Mamma at first did not like me to go, but I begged very hard, and the weather was so fine and clear, that she dressed me in my

best hat, and my worked muslin pelisse, kissed me, and begged papa not to take me too far to tire me ; but he said I looked like a little fairy, who could fly, when she was tired of walking. He asked mamma if she would not come with us, but she said she was very busy. I saw her give him her purse, with money in it. When we passed beneath the window, I looked up and saw her busy at her work, but she looked down on us and smiled.

Papa asked me about what we did, and made me tell him everything.

"Ah, my dear!" said he, "I hope to see you and your mother riding in your coach, now I am come home, if government does me justice. But mark, you must tell no one that your mamma works for money,—it would do her immense injury. I am sorry she feels herself reduced so low; but I shall soon put an end to it."

I did not well understand what he meant,—but we had reached the water-edge, and he called a boat to take us down to Greenwich. It was the first time I had been on the water, and I need not say how delightful it was. We walked in the park at Greenwich, under the fine old Spanish chesnut-trees, and the sun shone through the clear, transparent green leaves,—for it was the latter end of May, when they are still young. It was the first time I had ever taken notice

of what I saw, and I cannot describe the feeling that came into my heart when I looked at the beautiful spectacle of the sunshine dancing through the trees upon the grass, and felt the sweet air blowing round me, and the soft moss, and the large white clouds sailing about the blue sky. I wished to be ever so much bigger, that I might enjoy it all; for there seemed to be so much more than I could take in. I wanted mamma; she would have known all I felt.

We went to an inn to dine, into a room with a large bow window overhanging the river. I never had so many nice things to eat in my life;—little tiny fishes that looked like fairies—“white-bait,” papa called them—and all sorts of good things. Besides, papa made me taste everything, and seemed amused to watch me. I wished very much to take something home to mamma, but he said that would not be ladylike.

Whilst we were dining, a party of gentlemen came into the room and sat down at another table. Papa knew them, and they seemed very glad and surprised to see him. They made him join their party. They took a great deal of notice of me, and said how pretty I was. Papa told them I had been living with my grandfather, who rich, and would leave a pretty fortune  
d.

y head when I heard this, and said,

"Ah, no, Simon Morley does not like to give his money." They all laughed at this, and declared I was very witty, but I had heard Mary Rivers say so before.

My father made all the gentlemen laugh very much at his stories, but I did not understand them, and began to grow very tired of sitting to see wine drank. At last we went out to stroll through the town. As we passed a toy-shop, one of the gentlemen went in, and bought a beautiful, cut-glass smelling-bottle with a silver top, which he gave me. When we returned home, papa told mamma he had met with some old friends, influential persons, who would help him to obtain something from government. I thought that I should have a great deal to tell her too, but I was very sick and poorly, and had to lie in bed with a headache all the next day. Mamma gave me camomile-tea, like the little boy who eat too much plum-cake, in Mrs. Barbauld's story-book. My father had been to Africa with the governor of some island, and had been sent home with despatches on account of his health, he said, and he was in hopes of getting an island to govern, all to himself. He was not much at home—he went out nearly every day to breakfasts, or dinners, or water-parties. He never took mamma with him; she had to work very hard, for my father always wanted money when he went out. I did not

know then the harm she was doing her health by sitting day after day over her work, and never going out. My father was generally pretty good-tempered when he was at home, but he sometimes said very scornful things about her working, and told her "that if she had the good blood in her veins she would not demean herself to it." My mother never answered him at these times; occasionally she would say, quite good-humouredly, that when he obtained his place, she would take in no more work. But my father did not get the place under government, and in a little while it seemed quite natural to my father that she should work all day, and give him money: indeed her fingers went so fast, and her work looked so beautiful, that it was hard to fancy she could ever be tired of doing what seemed so easy. I am very miserable whenever I look back upon this period. I feel as if I ought to have known the injury she was inflicting on her health, and to have hindered her.

An incident happened at this time which I cannot think of without remorse. I do not like to write it down, but it belongs to my history. I wish being very sorry could undo the things we have done that are wrong, but they cannot, and repentance does no good except to ourselves.

One day, in the middle of July, my father came home in great haste and high spirits. He took

me up in his arms, and whirled me round the room, and gave mamma a kiss, and told her she must put up his things and get all ready for him to start the next morning for Grantley Park, in Worcestershire. He was going down with Lord Elderton to help him canvass, and he expected it would turn out a capital, good thing for him.

"I told Elderton I should take Clary down with me. He said by all means ; that she should have the run of the nursery ; his two children are near her age, and it will do her good. You would like to go, would you not, Clary ? You remember the gentleman who gave you that pretty bottle."

I clapped my hands, and said I should like to go very much ; but mamma at first refused to listen to such a thing. Papa said a great deal to persuade her, and declared that I should be ill if I remained all the summer in our little close rooms—that it would be quite wicked to refuse to let me go where I could run about in the fresh air. Mamma looked wistfully into the dusty street, and at the fine sunshine, and she could refuse no longer, though she said I do not like Clary to go anywhere without me ; she is too little to be trusted out of my own sight.

"It is just nonsense talking in that style," said my father ; "you know quite well that I cannot ask Lady Elderton to invite you ; and as to not liking Clary to go alone, you left her when she



needed your care much more than she does now. I shall be with her, and I suppose I have some affection as well as yourself. I desire I may hear no more frivolous objections."

I saw the tears fill mamma's eyes, and she started as if she had been stung; but she did not say a word, only put down her work and went into the next room. I felt very sorry, and almost wished that papa had never thought of taking me into the country.

In a little while mamma came back, and did not seem vexed in the least. She had my best white frock in her hand, and asked at what time we were to start in the morning.

Papa had become quite in good temper again, and said he was to dine with Lord Elderton at his Club, and would bring her word on his return, but that she must have all packed that night. He soon afterwards departed, saying he must go round by the tailor's, as he had been obliged to order a few decent clothes, and must go to try them on before they were sent home.

After his departure mamma sat for some time with her face buried in her hands, without speaking, until I grew uneasy, and tried to pull them away; she stooped down and kissed me, and then began to wash my white frocks, and papa's shirts and neckcloths; she seemed all the remainder of the day in very low spirits, and I did

not feel nearly so overjoyed to go on a visit as I should otherwise have done.

That night, when I was in bed, mamma sat down beside me and said,—

“My little girl is going away from me, will she, when she is left to herself, try not to be boastful, and not to make herself seem great to her companions, by telling histories that are not true?”

“Oh, yes! dear mamma,” said I, “you shall see how very good I will try to be.”

“Recollect my darling,” she continued, “that although I shall not be with you to see what you do, yet God sees you always, and knows all your thoughts, you are constantly in his sight, therefore try to live as in His presence, both now and all your life long.”

“Yes, dear mamma, but I wish you were going with us; it is so much easier to be good when you are with me. I do not like to go away from you at all.”

“My child, you heard that your father desired it; I am glad for you to have the advantage of country air for a little while. I cannot be always with you, and you must begin betimes to try earnestly to do what is right, not because it pleases me, but because it is right. I will give you a little verse to repeat over to yourself every morning.

“‘Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.’”

I did not understand all that mamma meant at the time, nor indeed until long afterwards, still her words remained in my mind like seed awaiting its due season.

The next morning a post-chaise came early to the door, and mamma, after kissing me a great many times, lifted me into it, she gave papa many charges about me; and at the last moment, put a pretty green silk purse into my hand, and when I opened it, I found the key of my little trunk, and a bright new shilling, which mamma had put there for pocket-money.

## CHAPTER VII.

WE drove along at a great rate, and soon left the streets of London behind; the fields and trees looked fresh and beautiful, and if only mamma had been with us, it would have been delightful.

Papa was in a very good temper, and told me droll stories about the monkeys in the forests in Africa, and the beautiful parrots, and about sharks and negroes; and how they stole a dog that belonged to the governor, and served it up roasted, at a great feast, instead of roast beef! These histories quite enchanted me, and I thought I could listen for ever, but I had been awake since early morning, and somehow I fell fast asleep, and when I awoke, we were near our journey's end.

"Now Clarissa!" said my father, pulling the tippet of my pelisse, and straightening my bonnet, which had been crushed up against his shoulder. "Listen to what I am going to say to you; you are going to visit very grand people indeed, and there is no need why you should tell them that you are not as grand as themselves, therefore I

desire you will not tell them anything about the garret you come from, nor say one word about the work your mamma does all day. It pleases her to do it until I get my appointment, but I do not approve of it, nor do I choose any one to know of it; it is for your good I am telling you this. The companions you will meet are all lords' and ladies' sons, and they would not play with you if they knew that your mamma sews for money. You are a cunning little thing, and understand what I say; let me see that you know how to obey me. If you want anything, to be like the rest of them, do not say that your mamma cannot afford, but come and tell me."

My father said this in a grave, peremptory voice, as if he were going to be angry. I felt frightened, and very puzzled at the difference between his instructions and those that mamma had given me. However, whilst I was pondering, the chaise turned into the park gates, and entered a grand avenue of Spanish chesnut-trees. The setting sun glanced across their trunks, and threw long shadows upon the grass; stately trees grew in all directions; and the deer were galloping about or standing in groups beneath the shadow of the trees. I had never seen deer before, and I nearly flung myself out of the chaise window in my delight. We drove up. The hall was built of and a semi-circular portico was supported

with pillars. We were received by two servants, in light blue and white livery, with powdered heads. They looked very grave and solemn. We were taken across a large hall, paved with black and white marble, through crimson folding-doors, into another hall, where there were portraits let into the walls, and some chairs and tables, and a broad staircase. One of the footmen rang a bell, and told the servant who appeared, to take me to the nursery ; whilst my father was conducted to his room, with the information that the second dinner bell would ring in twenty minutes.

I felt very much disposed to cry and insist upon going with my father, for I did not like being left by myself at all, but my father looked at me admonishingly, and said, "No nonsense, Clara, be a good girl ; I shall see you again after dinner ;" so the footman took hold of my hand, and led me to another part of the house, up another staircase and down a long passage, separated by a green-baize door from the rest of the house. I was quite awe-struck by all I saw, and felt as if I should never find my way to my father again. The footman who had me in charge threw open the door of a room, where several children of different ages were amusing themselves with toys upon the floor, or joining puzzles at a large table. One little boy was whipping a rocking-horse in a corner ; one or two grown-up persons

were with them, apparently engaged in their pursuits.

On the footman opening the door and announcing "Miss Donnelly," in a loud voice, a stately, well-dressed person, who I afterwards found was the head nurse, advanced from the upper end of the room, and, taking my hand, enquired from the footman with whom I had arrived, and whether I had brought an attendant.

"Miss Donnelly has just arrived with her father; no one is with them," replied the man, quite solemnly.

I fancied that a change passed over the face of Mrs. Rushley—she drew herself up rather stiffly, and said, "I have not received any announcement from my lady, but no doubt it is quite right." She looked at me somewhat doubtfully, but, calling in a clear, imperious voice to a young woman who came from an inner apartment, she said, "Johnson, you will prepare a bed for Miss Donnelly, and attend to her whilst she remains here." And then, speaking to me, she said, "Go and have your things taken off, my dear."

"Shall I dress her to go into the drawing-room after dinner?" enquired the maid.

"suppose so," replied Mrs. Rushley,

the key of my trunk on demand,  
they proceeded to inspect the con-

tents. Mamma had made everything herself, and Mrs. Rushley, as she selected a white frock for me to wear, condescended to observe that the work was beautiful, "but" she said, with a first attempt at a smile, "I suppose your mamma spoils you."

I felt very glad to be spoken to kindly, for I was quite cast down by so much stateliness.

When I returned to the nursery after being dressed, I found a tall, handsome lady in white satin, and with her neck and arms sparkling with jewels. It was Lady Elderton, who had called in the nursery, according to custom on her way down stairs to dinner. As I entered she was speaking to Mrs. Rushley, and I heard the words: "a great piece of impertinence—come to electioneer for Lord Elderton," and then catching sight of me, the lady spoke to me very politely, and said, she was glad to see me, and then she swept out of the room and we were called to tea. My companions were the children of Lady Elderton. Lady Blanche and Lady Susan—twins—and Viscount Connemara, a fine handsome boy of seven years old. They all looked curious and askance at me, and Mrs. Rushley kept me at an immense distance—nobody took any notice of me, and I felt very uncomfortable, and wished mamma had not let me come.

When we went down stairs after dinner, there were many persons at the table, the other



children went to their friends, but I stood belonging to nobody, for I did not see papa, but a gentleman took hold of me and asked if I had forgotten him—it was the gentleman who had given me the pretty smelling bottle that day when we were at Greenwich. He was Lord Elderton, he talked very kindly to me and gave me dessert, and papa spoke to me, but for all that I would rather have been drinking tea with mamma. I cried myself to sleep when I was in bed, I felt so very miserable, but I did not like any one to see my tears. The next day, as we were walking in the park, papa joined us, and addressing himself to Mrs. Rushley, who brought up the rear of the party, he said such nice, pleasant things to her, that by degrees she became quite gracious; he managed to discover that she had a son at sea, and then it turned out that this son had been first mate in the ship my father had come home in, and then they both talked of him, and Mrs. Rushley began to tell papa all her history, in which he seemed greatly interested. He in his turn talked about me. I had no idea before that he loved me so much, and he told her my health was very delicate, which I did not know either, and asked her to take care of me in a manner that made it seem quite a compliment. When papa wished us good morning, she bade him feel quite easy on my account, for

that she would take as much care of me as if I were her own child ; and certainly everything soon became quite different—the children began to play with me and let me have their toys, and Mrs. Rushley and the other nurses were very good-natured to me. Mrs. Rushley cross questioned me about home, and though papa had desired me to say nothing, she was so coaxing, besides asking me questions I could not avoid, that by little and little I told her everything I knew myself, and all I had picked up from the conversations I had overheard ; and the nurses settled it in conversation among themselves, that Mr. Donnelly was a real gentleman of good family, who had disobliterated his friends by marrying some artful person much below his station. I heard so much of birth, family, and rank whilst I was the visitor in this noble nursery, that being accustomed to pay attention to the talk of grown-up people, I began to reflect upon my own condition, and to feel as discontented and unhappy as I had once done about my cousin's scarlet coats and beaver hats. I wished that mamma had been a countess, and that I were called "Lady Clarissa," like Lady Blanche and Lady Susan Elderton. The nonsense of those nurses about this person not being eligible to visit at the park, because her father had made his money in trade, and the other person not being select, and Lady so-and-so being quite a *parvenue*

in the peerage, and Mr. so-and-so being only a clergyman's son, was not a proper match for the Honourable Miss Kerrison—the contempt with which every individual under a peer was considered—the eternal gossip that went on about every visitor who came to the house—their disgust at the mixed company that came on the public days at this “horrid election time”—the constant talk of dress, and appearance and style, filled my heart with a tide of vanity and bitterness, when I recollected that “papa having married below his rank,” I could never hope to be qualified to mix in high society—as the nurses and ladies maids phrased it.

However, in spite of this drawback, I enjoyed myself immensely—I liked the park and the gardens, and the Shetland ponies we used to ride upon. I liked the good living—but above all, I enjoyed going down to dessert and into the drawing-room, to see company. I had long since got rid of my original shyness, and I obtained all the notice that might be expected for a bold, clever, pretty child. The gentlemen took more notice of me than the ladies, and there were always half a dozen ready to quarrel who should take me, and they made me laugh and talk so fast, that sometimes we disturbed the whole table—no one checked me, for no one had any concern in me except to amuse themselves by playing

with me as they would have teased a canary bird to see it peck their fingers. However, I did not know that, and whilst the other children were kept quiet beside their mamma, I was praised and flattered and encouraged to make saucy speeches, until my head was completely turned. Lady Elderton had never seemed to like me, and sometimes she rang the bell, and dismissed us all abruptly, observing that "children's high spirits were quite oppressive," which could only apply to me, as Lady Blanche and Lady Susan, and the little viscount, were as quiet and well-behaved as children could be. The election-day came and past, and we children went in the carriage with Lady Elderton to see the member chaired; we all wore green and amber ribbons, and Lord Elderton took off his hat to us as he passed in triumph, for I forgot to say that he was the member who was returned.

A letter came that very day from mamma, wishing me to return home, and saying, "how lonely she felt without her little girl."

My father had made an engagement to pay a visit in the west of Ireland to some gentleman he had met at Elderton, and he said it would be an excellent opportunity to pay his respects to his mother, and to an uncle, an Irish baronet, from whom he had great expectations, and who would be all the more likely to receive him well, if he had other friends to fall back upon. He signified

to me his intention of sending me home the next day by some one he knew, who would take charge of me up to London.

I began to cry violently on hearing this announcement. There was to be a children's ball in another week, and I was mad to stay for it, although Lady Elderton had not asked me. My father grew angry at my opposition, and refused to listen to me. I flung myself into a violent passion, that shocked Mrs. Rushley, and quite frightened the other children. I was naturally very passionate, though the strict subjection in which I had been kept by my grandmother, and the judicious kindness of my mother, had prevented my ever shewing my natural disposition in perfection. It was the first time I had ever had a chance of shewing the unchecked violence of my temper. If any one had told me of it beforehand, I should have been the last to believe myself capable of it. The flattery and liberty of the last fortnight had completely spoiled me. My father was quite unable to calm the storm he had raised. I was a complete little fury.

Mrs. Rushley at length ordered the stout housemaid to lift me up and carry me into another room—a feat she accomplished at the expense of a few bites and scratches ; and then having dashed some cold water on my face, she left me to kick and scream and recover at my leisure.

Mrs. Rushley declared that I should not go down to dessert ; but the little viscount, who had become very fond of me, interceded very earnestly in my favour, and creeping into the room where I still lay on the floor sullenly sobbing, he coaxed me to come out and beg pardon, and promise to be good. Perhaps no one ever feels so penitent and ashamed as a person recovering their senses after a fit of passion. I allowed myself to be persuaded, and went up to Mrs. Rushley, and promised to be good, and put my face up to kiss her. I went down stairs with the other children as usual, although my face bore strong traces of tears. Lord Elderton took me on his knee, and inquired what ailed his little favourite ? When he heard, he bade me be a good girl, and he would see what could be done.

The next day papa came into the nursery to wish me good bye, and told me that I might remain for the ball, on condition that I would be very good, and go home without crying the day afterwards, when there would be some one who would take me. He made a handsome present to Mrs. Rushley, and he gave me a golden half-guinea.

Mrs. Rushley said something about a dress ; he bid her get whatever she thought proper, and to send the bill by me when I returned home, and that Mrs. Donnelly would remit the amount. My

conscience smote me when I heard that, for I recollected how hard poor mamma was obliged to work. I was almost on the point of saying that I would go home ; for now that I had carried my point, I did not feel nearly so anxious to remain ; but Mrs Rushley said,—

“ Yes, of course Miss Donnelly will require something new for the occasion.”

“ You will get whatever you and Lady Elderton deem most suitable,” replied my father ; and kissing me once more, and bidding me be very good, he went down stairs, and I saw the chaise drive away with him. I felt very miserable when I saw that he was quite gone, and had left me by myself—a panic seized me that I should never find my way back to mamma. I began to cry, and wished as earnestly to go home as ever I had desired to remain. Mrs. Rushley said rather sharply,—

“ Come, Miss Donnelly, dry your eyes, you ought to be satisfied now you have your own way. I cannot do with crying young ladies in the nursery ; go into your own room, if you must cry ; the others are going to their exercise in the park, and you will be left behind if you are not ready.”

She had never spoken to me so sharply before. From my own experience I can declare, that the pleasure which is snatched at the expense of ne-

glecting a positive duty never turns out to be worth anything. I did not know it at this time, but to date from this my first signal experience, I have never found the case otherwise.

This week, for which I had begged so hard, turned out as unhappy and unfortunate as a week not marked with a serious affliction could well be. When we went down to dessert on the day that my father left, there were only Lady Elderton and two other ladies; Lord Elderton had gone up to London, and all the other gentlemen who had been staying at the hall, were departed. It was a great change from the notice I had been accustomed to receive at these times. I sidled up to one of the ladies, who received me very coolly, and begged me to go further off, for fear the juice of my peach should stain her dress; and Lady Elderton observed that now there were no gentlemen to make me rude, she hoped I would learn to behave a little more quietly than I generally did. All the notice bestowed fell to the share of Lady Blanche and Lady Susan. Little Frank Conemara and I upset a decanter of wine in playing bowls across the table with our fruit, and were sent up stairs in disgrace. I heard the words "rude, tiresome child," as I shut the door.

I seemed to have fallen out of favour with every body at once. The under nurses complained that I gave more trouble than the other three put



together. Lady Blanche and Lady Susan quarrelled with me, and refused to let me touch any of their play-things ; only little Frank remained my friend. As to Mrs. Rushley, she declared that she had never seen a child so changed for the worse in her life ; and that if she had not seen the difference she could not have believed it.

I tried very much to be good, but I suppose I had lost the habit of it, for everything I did was wrong. When Mrs. Rushley spoke to Lady Elderton about my dress for the ball, her ladyship replied,—

“Of course she must not be a fright, but I think it a ridiculous piece of extravagance for persons in their situation of life. Do not let her be dressed like Blanche and Susan, I beg.”

I felt very unhappy, and wished myself at home many times, but it was too late ; I was obliged to stay now until there was some one to take me home.

When our dresses were finished, we were taken into her ladyship's dressing-room, to shew ourselves. Lady Blanche and Lady Susan were dressed alike, in white gauze over white silk slips, trimmed with a garland of small white roses, and white kid shoes trimmed with blue ribbon. This, as I need not say, was a fashion of many years ago. My dress was pink gauze over pink silk, and my shoes were trimmed with pink to match.

Her ladyship examined us and turned us round, and expressed her approval, though she scarcely noticed me at all. Whilst she was suggesting some improvement in Lady Susan's dress, I crept up to a large pier dressing-glass that came to the ground. Whilst I stood admiring myself very much indeed, and walking backwards to catch a view of my new shoes, I did not see where I was going, and ran against a vase of gold fish, which stood near, and upset them, losing my own balance with the shock, and falling amongst them. The confusion that ensued was not trifling.

"Oh, that tiresome child!" screamed her ladyship, "my fish, my beautiful fish are all killed!"

Mrs. Rushley lifted me up, and putting us all three outside the door, bade us go into the nursery, where, silent and ashamed, I allowed my new dress to be taken off, and a great cut in my hand, from the broken glass, to be dressed with sticking-plaster.

"Your beautiful dress is quite spoiled, Miss Clarissa; I do not think you will be able to wear it," said one of the nurses. At that moment I did not care whether it was spoiled or not, I felt so subdued and ashamed of myself. I was not allowed to go down to dessert that day, Lady Elderton declaring that I was too much for her nerves.

The next day was the ball: it was the birth-

day of the twins, Blanche and Susan, who entered their seventh year, and this ball was given in their honour. Lord Elderton came home from London, and brought us all the most beautiful presents. To me a handsome coral necklace, and a case containing scissors, thimble, knife, and bodkin, all mounted in silver. He spoke very kindly to me, which made me even happier than the presents.

We were dressed early, that we might be in the drawing-room to receive our guests. One of the nurses had managed to repair the damage done to my new frock, but I was still very subdued by the remembrance of my disgrace. Frank Connemara engaged me to dance with him, and tried to make me promise not to dance with any one else, nor indeed to speak to any of the boys who were coming.

There were about thirty children, besides many grown-up persons. I did not recollect, until I stood up, that I scarcely knew how to dance. Mamma had taught me a little, and I had practised steps with the Ladies Blanche and Susan, but I did not dance nearly so well as they did; however, with children of our age, it did not much signify, and Frank Connemara made fun of the girls who did their steps well. I heard several persons asking who was the pretty little girl in pink, meaning me, and saying what nice

manners I had. I had a great number of partners, and some of them great boys, nearly grown-up. Frank Connemara looked dreadfully angry, and once pinched my arm when he passed me in dancing, which I told him was rude and spiteful. He said he did not care, and that he would poison George Somerset at supper-time. However, he did not, but he climbed upon a bench, and poured a glass of negus down the collar of his coat.

It certainly was a very pretty sight, that ball. There were fireworks after supper, which were beautiful. I had never seen any before, and I should never have been weary of looking at them, but they soon came to an end; and now the ball was over, and all the children went home, and we went to bed. I had not enjoyed the ball so much as I expected; it seemed as though I ought to have been very happy, but a dullness had come over everything. A sense that I had displeased those I was staying with, and a vague fear that mamma would be sorry and angry at my remaining after she had desired me to come home, weighed upon my spirits, and I thought that this extra week, and the ball besides, were not worth the price I had paid to obtain them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I WAS roused very early from my slumbers the following morning ; and, only half awake, was hastily dressed, that I might be ready to go with the housekeeper, who was travelling up to town in the mail-coach, which passed the lodge gates at seven o'clock. It was rather an ignominious departure. Lady Elderton was of course invisible. She had wished me good bye on the previous evening, and had given orders that the gardener should put up a basket of fruit and flowers, for me to take to mamma. But I did not see the children ; they were all asleep, and Mrs. Rushley had given strict orders that I was to move about very quietly, that neither she nor they might be disturbed. The housemaid, whose charge I had been, was the only person I saw. I kissed her, and charged her with many messages to Frank Connemara and the children ; and I tried to make her take the new shilling mamma had given me, but she would not have it. She called  
a dear little generous thing, and said she was  
sorry I was going, which was very kind of

her, for I am sure I had given her a great deal of trouble.

There was no time to lose. She hurried me away to the housekeeper's room to have some breakfast, telling me, as we went, that Mrs. Wilkins was in a dreadful temper at having to travel by the mail-coach, instead of having a post-chaise all to herself. I found out too, that her ill-temper had been considerably increased by having to take charge of me. She considered that her ladyship had taken a great liberty with her. She was a tall and rather sullen-looking woman, with cold silent manners, which she took for being "very superior to her situation." The other servants all hated her. I had heard a great deal of her in conversations between Johnson and the under nurses, and I dreaded the thoughts of being with her a whole day. She was seated at a substantial breakfast when we entered. She did not speak to me, but, addressing Johnson, inquired whether I was ready, and whether my luggage had been taken to the lodge. Her words seemed, every one of them, as if they were snipped off by a pair of scissors as they left her lips.

She gave me some breakfast, but I could not eat, I felt very sorry to be sent away without one to say good bye, or to hope I would come again. When Mrs. Wilkins had finished breakfast, she put all manner of good things into a

large basket, and putting on a large silk cloak, a bonnet and veil, and taking a parasol (which Johnson said she carried to shew she was above a servant), she bade a footman follow to the lodge with me and the basket.

There was nobody in the coach when we entered, and Mrs. Wilkins arranged herself so as to fill the best half of it. I sat timidly in a corner, with my back to the horses, and though it was very chilly so early in the morning, she never gave me one of her shawls, nor did she speak to me the whole day, except once to bid me take my feet off her silk dress; but she told every one who got into the coach during the day, that she was not at all accustomed to that kind of travelling and felt timid in being alone in a public vehicle; but for all that, I do not think any one could have mistaken her for anything but what she was—she did not look to me in the least like a lady.

When we arrived in London she professed to expect that mamma would have a servant waiting for me, but as Lady Elderton had given orders that she should herself see me safe home, she did not dare to disobey, but as the coach went through many streets she kept muttering to her-

respectable persons “accustomed to the  
' would be sure to have their throats  
robbed in such a neighbourhood, and

when at last the coach stopped in the little quiet street where we lived, she looked round and said it was "a real imposition for people who lived in such places, to come visiting in noblemen's houses;" but I did not care in the least what she thought; mamma was watching for me at the window, and came running down stairs to meet me. She went out and spoke very politely to Mrs. Wilkins—who kept her seat in the coach—and thanked her for her care of me. Mrs. Wilkins was obliged to answer civilly, and I felt very glad she should have seen that mamma was a lady.

When I got into our little sitting-room, mamma had tea ready for me, and had tried to make the room look pleasant and pretty, that I might not think it a change from the park. Dick, the canary, had a fine, new gilded cage hung with a bower of chickweed, and he was singing with all his might. When I saw mamma again and felt her arms round me, I wondered how I could have remained away from her so long. It was delightful to be at home again with mamma who loved me, and who would not grow tired of me. Mamma was very much pleased with the flowers I had brought; they seemed such a treat to her, that I felt quite sorry, when I thought that I had been amongst a whole garden full of them for so long, whilst she had been at home by herself without a single one.



When I had leisure to look at her, I thought she appeared very thin and pale, but she said she was quite well, and I began to feed her with the grapes I had brought; I would not touch one of them myself, though she begged me. Seeing mamma again, made me quite forget how tired I had been with my journey. I told her about the the park, and the rides we used to have on the Shetland ponies—about the children and about Frank Connemara, and about the ball, but somehow I did not like to talk about coming down to dessert after dinner, it suddenly seemed as if I had been very rude and forward, and had not behaved as mamma would have liked—"I have a surprise for my little girl," said mamma at length, when she could put in a word,—“grandmamma has sent me some money, and I have been thinking that we will go to the sea-side for a week—I felt sorry to lose the fine weather of this last week; will it not be charming to walk on the shore and see the tide come in?”

“Oh, mamma, how charming! Why did you not tell me when you sent for me to come home, oh, how much I wish I had come!” I was by this time, however, fairly tired out, and fell asleep whilst mamma undressed me.

The next morning when mamma was unpacking my trunk, and putting away my things, a folded paper fell to the ground; it was the

bill for my dress and for several other articles which Mrs. Rushley, considering "necessary for me," had procured, as my father had desired, without thinking what he meant—I saw the colour mount up to mamma's forehead.

"What is this, Clarissa? Why, if you needed anything, was I not written to? who ordered these things? Lady Elderton?"

"No, mamma, Mrs. Rushley. Papa told her."

Mamma spoke so gravely that I felt quite frightened, and all the more so, as I had myself thought that there was more money spent than mamma would like.

"Here is a bill for the making and materials of a ball dress—shoes, gloves, ribbons, in all nearly five pounds." I held down my head and felt as though I were melting away, I knew mamma could not afford to pay so much. She put away the rest of my clothes in silence, and then taking a white frock that needed mending, she sat down to her work, grave and silent. I felt very unhappy, and sat down beside her without speaking,—at last she said, "will you like to write to the little companions you have left, if so, I will enclose it in my letter, as I am going to write to Lady Elderton?"

I said I should, although at that moment I hated the very thoughts of my visit.

Mamma ruled me some lines and mended me a

pen; but I did not know what to say, I could only think of this bill which I had brought home for mamma to pay,—however, I scrawled a childish note, and mamma enclosed it along with some money, and sealing it very carefully, we then took it to the post. After it was gone, mamma seemed more cheerful; and I tried to hope that there was no harm done.

As she sat sewing after tea, I said, “Dear mamma, when are we going to the sea-side—tomorrow?”

“I fear, my dear, we cannot go at all.”

“Why not, when grandmamma sent you the money?”

“That is gone away; you saw me put it in the letter.”

“For that stupid ball dress?”

“Yes.”

“And would you have liked to go to the sea-side?”

“Very much indeed; but we cannot afford it now, so we will not think about it.”

A pang of remorse shot through my heart.

“Oh, mamma, mamma! and it is I who have hindered you! and now you will have to stay at home and work.”

I hid my face in her lap, and burst into a passion of tears that almost shook me to pieces. I saw my disobedience, and, like a child, I aggra-

vated my fault by its consequences. My mother endeavoured to calm me, but in vain.

"Why did you not tell me why I was to come home? It is all your fault—why did you let me be so wicked?"

I sobbed, and then the recollection of my mother working by herself at home, and now disappointed through me, aggravated my self-reproach. I wept in a passion of gusty remorse, that was not less violent than the former one.

"Oh mamma, mamma, I do love you so much! and now you will never believe me."

Mamma tried to take me on her knee, but I flung myself on the floor, and rolled about in a perfect frenzy of passion. At last I heard mamma say,—

"You are making me very ill, Clarissa, with this violence. When you are quiet I will talk to you."

She again lifted me up, and rested my head upon her bosom. After a little while my passion had exhausted itself. I looked up into her face, and said,—

"Now, mamma, will you talk to me as you promised?"

I still sobbed at intervals, but the violence of the storm had passed. She kept me in her arms a little longer, and then she wiped my eyes, and, taking me into the next room, washed my face

and hands with rose water—straightened my ruffled hair and disordered dress—and then she took me once more on her knee, looking at me very kindly, but very gravely.

“Why is my little girl so passionate?”

“Because I am so sorry.”

“Well, tell me all about it.”

“Mamma, mamma,” and I began to sob again, “all your money is gone to pay for that nasty dress, and you cannot go out.”

“That is not the thing to be sorry for, my darling; your fault lay in being disobedient to my wishes, when I desired you to come home—all the rest has come from that.”

“But, mamma, how could I tell why you wanted me? If you had told me I would have come.”

“My dear little girl, in this world we never know beforehand what the consequences of our actions will be; therefore our only guide is to do right—to do what our conscience tells us ought to be done, without thinking whether we like it or not. We must have faith, to believe that if we try to do right it will turn out the best in the end, even although we cannot see how it will happen—we must have faith to do what is right, no matter how hard and disagreeable it is, and we are quite sure it will turn out to be the best for us.”

“Mamma, how am I to know what is

right? I am sure I did not know I was doing wrong to stay."

"Are you quite sure of that, Clarissa?" said my mother, looking at me; "did you never feel a doubt whether you had done right in preferring your own wishes to mine?"

"No, not until it was over, and papa had told me I might stay, and then I did not feel quite sure."

"Sure of what?"

"I hardly knew; I did not see I had done wrong so plainly as I do now; but I was not satisfied—I wished I could come home to you, and yet I wanted to stay."

"My darling, when we choose the right thing, we are not divided in our minds—we are content."

"But how am I to know what is right?"

"If we cultivate a sincere desire to do always the thing that is right, our conscience will become clearer and clearer to perceive what we ought to do. God has promised, that to those who ask Him, He will shew the good and the right way, and give them strength to follow it; so my little girl is not left to her own wisdom or her own strength. If what has now occurred leads you to desire to do right more than to please yourself, it will be a lesson for which you may be thankful as long as you live."

"But, mamma, it is so hard to be good and to recollect things."

"I am very glad to hear you say so, my love ; it sounds as if you would try in earnest. The last time we talked you told me it was very easy."

"Oh, mamma, you do not know everything yet—I am much worse than you think me. I shall be happier when you know everything, because then, if you love me, you will not think me better than I am."

"Well, my dear, do just as you think right."

I made a pause, and then, hiding my face in her bosom, I confessed the dreadful passion to which I had given way, and all that, to my newly-roused conscience, seemed to have been wrong. When I ceased, mamma kissed me, as if she loved me very much, and said,—

"We will not talk of ourselves any longer now. I have bought a beautiful story, which I should like to hear, for I have not read it since I was a little girl as young as you are. I wonder if it will interest you as much as it did me."

It was indeed a beautiful story ; I liked it even better than the "Orphans." It was Mrs. Trimmer's "Fabulous Histories,"—an account of a family of robins. I was enchanted ; it was like being taken to live in a bird's-nest, and hearing what was talked about there. I have read it again since I grew up ; but although my affection for "Robin,"

"Dicky," "Flapsy," and "Pecksy," remains indelible, still I must always regret that I disturbed my happy recollections of the book by endeavouring to renew them.

When I was in bed that night, a bright thought came into my head, and I could scarcely go to sleep for thinking of it. The half-guinea papa had given me was still safe in my purse. The next morning, as soon as it was light, I got up, and brought it into bed, waiting impatiently enough till mamma opened her eyes, to ask her whether it would be enough to take us to the sea-side. She promised we would go somewhere with it,—and two days afterwards, we went to Richmond, and walked about in the fields and in the park, and dined under the trees, and sailed in a boat on the river. Oh, it was such a happy day! Mamma enjoyed it so much, and I think, at the time, I loved her more for allowing me to give her my half-guinea, than for anything else in the world, though I could not help recollecting that we might have had many such pleasant days by the sea-side.



## CHAPTER IX.

MAMMA and I lived on as we had done before papa's return ; and she had now more work than she could execute.

Through Lady Southend's recommendations and introductions, she had been employed at first by a few fashionable ladies, but the excellence of her work, and her great taste in the designs of her patterns, had become known, and it began to be the fashion to have veils, and shawls, and dresses embroidered after patterns invented by Mrs. Donnelly.

I remember one day mamma and I were in a shop, the man who was waiting upon her did not know who she was, and displayed a box of lace goods which he assured her, by way of recommendation, were worked from Mrs. Donnelly's designs ! I felt very proud, and wanted to tell him that my mamma was Mrs. Donnelly, but she took hold of my hand, as if she had known what I was going to say, and, telling the man she had nothing more to buy, left the shop.

Papa wrote from time to time ; he spoke in

every letter of a government appointment, which he had every reason to expect ; and when mamma answered him, she always put some money in her letter.

A great number of bills came in for things which I had heard him tell mamma he had paid. Mamma paid them whenever she could, but sometimes they were more than she could afford, and at last she consulted Lady Southend. One day, when a large bill from a tailor had been brought, and the man threatened to put in an "execution,"—I thought that meant putting to death—and I was very frightened at the word.

Lady Southend was very angry when she heard what mamma had already paid, and made her promise not to meddle with any more of papa's debts, and endeavoured besides to make her promise she would send him no more money, but that mamma refused to agree to. The old lady insisted that we should change our lodgings, and as she had *protégés* in every direction, she took rooms for us in the house of a widow, who lived in a little street not far from Battersea-bridge. It was a neat, pretty row of cottages, each with a tiny garden before the door, and our house was on the sunny side of the way. It was a great change for the better, and I wondered why the old lady had not placed us there at first ; but, though a kind friend, she was very despotic, and

did not like to be either questioned or contradicted. Our new rooms were very small ; but there were charming lanes and nursery gardens in the neighbourhood to go to, when mamma had time to walk with me.

Mamma wrote to tell papa of our change of abode, and he wrote us back to say how delighted he was to hear we were so comfortable, and to tell us that he had been invited to visit the castle of a gentleman on the shores of one of the lakes of Connemara, and that he should remain there some time. After this she did not hear from him again. Mamma said it was a wild place, and that perhaps there was no post-office. I wondered whether he would meet with Frank Connemara, whom I had not forgotten.

Our life went on without any particular incident to mark it. I became more and more my mother's companion ; and, like all children living constantly with a grown-up person, bestowing so much pains as my mother did, I was less childish than might be imagined from my age, which at this time was about seven years. I had never felt any curiosity to hear about our relations, nor why we lived away from everybody ; but a slight incident induced my mother to tell me something of her history. The occasion of it was as follows :—

One day mamma had finished a magnificent

court train of white satin, embroidered with pansies and rose-buds, finished by a border of rich gold embroidery. The taste with which the flowers were shaded and disposed, were more remarkable than even the richness of the materials. She had spread it out to observe the effect; I began to think how delightful it must be to go to balls and parties and wear such beautiful dresses, and when I thought that, perhaps I should never see anything of the kind, a pang of discontent shot through my heart.

"Of what is my little girl thinking, that she looks so grave?" said my mother, kissing my forehead.

"I was thinking, that I should like to go to Court, and be a great beauty, and wear gold and diamonds, like Cinderella."

"I cannot flatter you, my dear, with any hopes that your wishes will be granted."

I remember the rage I felt on hearing this reasonable speech. I began to cry with passion.

"And why," said I, stamping my foot, "must we live here in this nasty place! and never go anywhere that is beautiful! Why must I never go to balls and parties when I grow up?"

"Because it is not likely you will ever be invited, my dear; but wait till the time comes, and then we shall see. Do not weep for troubles so long beforehand. You are too young to go out for many years to come."

I was too thoroughly in a bad temper to listen to reason. I twisted myself away from mamma's hand, and sat down, in a strange passion, upon a little stool. Mamma looked at me with grave surprise ; at last she said,—

“My dear Clarissa, if you have any desire to be a beauty, you must not begin by frowning as you do at this moment. Cinderella never lost her temper, nor looked cross ; we are expressly told so in the story. So put on your bonnet, and get ready to go with me to take this work home ; and when we come back, I will tell you a true story,—that is to say, if you have recovered your temper.”

I slowly obeyed, but though in general I liked to go out with mamma, on this day my feelings were too much ruffled by discontent to allow me to enjoy anything ; the incidents of our visit only aggravated my ill-humour. Our destination was a fine house in Cavendish Square. The lady we had come to see, Mrs. Reddesdale, was engaged when we arrived, and we had to sit down in the hall until she was at liberty. At length we were shewn into her dressing-room, where Mrs. Reddesdale was sitting in a large chair, wrapped in a white dressing-gown, and her maid was brushing her beautiful, long hair. She was a proud, cross-looking woman, which hindered her from being handsome.

A many-coloured macaw began to scream on our entrance, and a little white poodle dog, with a blue ribbon round its neck, came up to me and snapped at my fingers, and caught hold of my frock, barking with all its might. The lady put her hands up to her ears, and tried to reduce her pets to silence.

"Is that your little girl?" said she, in a hard, disagreeable voice; "my pets cannot endure children; do not bring her here again, it distresses them. Poor Monton, good Monton, be quiet."

Monton sank growling upon his cushion; the macaw was silenced, and mamma, without being asked to sit down, was requested to shew what she had brought.

"Ah, well! yes, that will do; your own design, I suppose! if the rose-buds had been larger, it would have been an improvement; it is too late to alter them now, I suppose; I dare say I shall never wear it. I want you to see if you can do anything with a dress I am to wear to-night, I don't like the style in which Angelique has trimmed it."

The dress was brought; it was white gauze, trimmed with different shades of ivy leaves.

Mamma suggested some improvements; and we were taken into Mademoiselle Angelique's room, that they might be carried into effect. During the time that she was thus engaged,

Mademoiselle went to dinner, but no refreshment was offered to mamma. When her task was finished, the lady only said,—

“Ah, that certainly looks better!” But she never thanked mamma, nor offered to pay her for the work she had brought home; she dismissed her by saying,—

“If I should have anything more for you to do, I suppose the footman will know where to find you?”

My mother courtsied and withdrew, leading me by the hand.

We did not speak much as we went along. When we arrived at home, mamma was very tired. I made her sit down in an easy chair, and took away her walking things; then I made tea, as I was often accustomed to do, boiled an egg, and made a plate of toast, which I had learned to do very dexterously, and setting it on a little table before mamma, I burst into a gush of indignant tears, which had been silently gathering, and exclaimed,—

“I hope you will never go to that place again, to be treated like a servant!”

Mamma tapped me on the cheek, and said, smilingly, “My Clarissa is such a charming little servant to me, that she is quite an ornament to the condition. I should feel proud to be taken for one like her.”

"Mamma, do not laugh at me, please; I do not mind how much of a servant I am for you, but that proud, disagreeable woman had no right to speak in that tone," said I, vehemently.

"Lady Reddesdale's manners are not pleasant, certainly, but I feel there is no obligation on me to try to improve them. I do not take the smallest interest in her."

"But that she should be able to order you about as she did, is not to be endured."

Mamma laughed outright at my vehemence, and said, "Come, Clary, drink your tea, I am sure you need it; ask Mrs. Haslam to bring in the cold beef, and after the things are cleared away, I will tell you the history I promised."

After tea mamma sat a little while, as if musing, and then drawing me close to her, she began as follows.



## CHAPTER X.

“MY dear Clarissa, you are very young to be told my history, but I do not know how long I may be spared to you. I would rather you heard it from myself than from others. I would fain hope that my mistakes may be a lesson to you, as you seem somewhat disposed to fall into the same faults.

“I was born at the Mettingham Arms, in Dunnington, where your uncle and aunt live now ; but it was a far prettier place when I was a little girl, and before it had undergone its course of improvements. It was then a rambling white-washed building, built round three sides of a large yard, and partly covered with thatch, and partly with red tiles, grown over with moss and houseleek. The walls were quite dazzling, they were so white, and it seems to me now as if the sun always shone in those days. Almost the first thing I can recollect was a number of beautiful white pigeons flying about, strutting and cooing up and down the roof, or stepping with their pretty pink feet amongst the stones that paved

the yard. My mother used to let me feed them, and they were so tame that they would come close to me, and even eat from my hand, if they were tempted with pease, which pigeons love dearly. There was an old lame raven too, a great favourite, and very tame—nobody knew how old he was. He had been known about the house ever since it was built, and that was more than eighty years. He was a very bold bird, and cared for nobody. He used to fight the cat for eating her own dinner, and he had more than once a pitched battle with the turkey cock, and drove it out of the yard. I offended him once, when I was a very little girl, playing by myself in the garden: he seized hold of my finger and bit it to the bone, in spite of my screams, seizing it again whenever I attempted to snatch it away. It was well for me that my nurse heard me at last, and came to help me. I had everything that could make a child happy, everybody was kind to me, and I had a beautiful little poney with a side-saddle, and a little gig, made exactly like a real one, in which I used to be drawn about.

“My mother was very kind to me in every respect but one, which was, that she never checked or contradicted me, however unreasonable I might be; she had not much time to attend to me herself, so I was sent to school

when about your age. There were only twelve young ladies, but all of them, with the exception of myself, belonged to the higher ranks of society. We were all dressed alike, it was the rule of the school; in the Winter we wore light blue cloth dresses, and in the Summer, white frocks, and nankeen spencers. We were taught to be very polite and ladylike in our behaviour to each other. My mother allowed me a great deal of pocket money for a little girl, and every fortnight she sent me a parcel containing an iced plum cake, and many other good things which were always equally divided amongst the whole school, which was a very good rule. A great deal of pains were taken with our manners and deportment; we were not allowed to sit with our elbows on the table and our chin in our hands, like my little girl at this moment; and whilst we learned our lessons, we had to lie down on the floor, that we might not fall into awkward habits of stooping, or sitting with our heads down. It must have seemed very strange to any one coming in, to see us all lying in a row upon the floor; there was not much rest in it, and we did not like it. One day I remember getting into sad disgrace; I was very tired of lying down, and thinking of anything but my lessons, the servant came in to speak to Miss Le French; she looked at me as she passed, and

smiled, as if to say that I was concerned in what she came about. I thought that mamma had come to see me. I listened, and felt sure I heard something about 'Mrs. Morley.' Miss Le French left the room and I expected to be called—but no summons came—I could wait patiently no longer, I rose up and crept quietly down the school-room stairs and went to the drawing-room door—there was company, for I heard talking, and I fancied I could distinguish mamma's voice. I do not know what I should have done, but the door opened suddenly, and I fell head foremost into a room full of strangers! I remember the dreadful fright and confusion of the moment, and how desperately I wished a trap door would open and receive me, but instead of that, Miss Louisa Le French lifted me up and asked me what I wanted there. I do not know how I explained myself, nor how I got back to the school-room. I told the truth as well as I could, and I had forty lines of French poetry to learn, as a penalty for going down stairs without leave, and I was also sentenced to make myself a pair of brown paper gloves, because I had not put a pair on previous to attempting to enter the drawing-room—for wearing gloves was a rigorous piece of etiquette never dispensed with. The servant was reprimanded and forbidden to look or smile at the young ladies, or hold any intercourse with them.

“I could tell you a great many other stories about my school life, but they must be for another time.

“As I grew older, I am sorry to say, that I took up many foolish and hurtful notions, which have been the cause of much misery to me. I have told you that my companions mostly belonged to a superior rank to myself—so long as I was a child it did not much signify, but when I grew up to be a great girl, and admitted to the confidential conversations of great girls like myself, I became aware of the distinction there was between us, and I grew ashamed of the condition to which I was born, and very discontented at being ‘only the daughter of an inn-keeper,’ as Miss Charlotte Ridley called me, she herself being the daughter of a bishop—another girl, whose father had been a distiller, but was now a Member of Parliament, told us long stories about her mamma’s rigidity in keeping up her dignity, and how she had refused to patronise a charity ball, because the wife of an attorney was upon the committee. All this might have passed over as girlish nonsense, if it had not been impressed upon me by a very disagreeable piece of experience. One of my school friends was very anxious I should spend the holidays with her, and we wrote mutually home to obtain permission ;—my friend received a refusal from her parents, because, as it would be quite

impossible for her to visit me at my home in return, there would be an inconvenience in continuing the acquaintance—some polite reason or other—a journey, I think—was alledged as the excuse to be given to me, but my friend shewed me the letter, and very much mortified I felt.

“My mother had sent me to school so early that I had been trained to be the show-pupil, and my natural vanity and love of display was flattered, although Miss Le French lamented over the disadvantage of my ‘low connexions.’ A cowardly shame for the parents it had pleased Providence to give me was thus encouraged and cultivated, with a foolish, unavailing repining after birth and station that never could be mine.

“I am sorry to say nobody ever told me that the one thing needful in this life is to do our duty in the station we are called to fill. If I had known this, it would in time have reconciled all the contradictions and difficulties of my position.

“For the last twelve months that I was at school, I was what is called a ‘parlour boarder;’ which meant that I was permitted to sit in Miss Le French’s elegant drawing-room, and to go out with her when she went visiting. At length the day came when I was to leave school, and go home for good. My dear mother sent a chaise and a smart postilion, in a fine new jacket,

which would have been almost as good as a carriage, if the words, 'Simon Morley—Mettingham Arms,' had not been painted on the door in large letters.

"I remember so well my first day at home. The house was in a great bustle, owing to the arrival of three carriages, full of company, almost at the same time. Every room was occupied, and my mother had not a moment to speak to me. I found my way to the old nursery, which had been fitted up as a bed-room for me. I saw the fine ladies, and the ladies' maids, and I felt all the distance there was between us; and very miserable and discontented I became.

"When we came down to dinner, which was laid out in the bar, a little room like a lantern, with windows all round, to enable my mother to see everything that went on. I felt quite ashamed of sitting down, because everybody could see us, and my mother was called away at least half-a-dozen times to give orders, and attend to fresh arrivals.

"This was only the beginning of my vexations. I found all my old companions so different from what I had been taught to admire at school, that I considered them vulgar, disagreeable, and quite beneath me, so no wonder they disliked me in return. I thought everybody vulgar who differed in the least from what I had seen at school,

which only shewed my own ignorance and vulgarity.

“ My father wished me to assist my mother, who had more fatigue than was good for her ; and my mother hoped I should be a companion to her now that I was come home. I was insolent and discontented, and as it was not from any affection that I assisted her to keep the books and make out the bills, but only because I feared my father, it was heavy drudgery. I hated home, and all belonging to it, and behaved very insolently and unkindly to my mother, which did not in the least alter my actual position, or bring me any nearer to a rank and standing superior to what was my own. It only made me more miserable, and my poor dear mother very unhappy. I tell you all this, dear Clara, because you are inclined to be something like what I was, and I wish you to know what came from this wicked discontent.

“ When I had been at home a short time, I received an invitation to pay a visit to a young lady who had been my great friend at school, but who had left sometime before me. She lived at a beautiful house, in a fine park, and her father was very proud of his old family, and considered it a great condescension to invite me ; but his daughter was an invalid, and wished to see me, I was accordingly invited, but he made me feel by



his ceremonious manner, that he never forgot I was not his daughter's equal.

“I enjoyed my visit to the park in spite of all drawbacks, and hated the thought of going back home ; I was recalled sooner than I expected ; an election dinner given at our house obliged my mother to write for me to return and assist her.”

My mother paused, and for a few moments seemed unable to proceed, at last she said, in an altered tone,—

“My dear Clarissa, I was a vain, ungrateful, ignorant girl ; instead of going home I ran away, and married a young Irish gentleman, of whom I knew nothing, except that he belonged to an old Irish family, and that he had an uncle, a baronet. It was your father—I had only one wish, to get away from home, and I did not stop to reflect how miserable it would make my mother to see the little affection I had for her and how much I hated living at home. But you shall hear how I was punished.

“His family was very proud, and they felt very angry with your father for marrying ‘below himself,’ as they called it. He had no money, but he fancied that as my father was rich, I should have a great deal. But my father was much hurt and offended to see me so ashamed of my own parents, and he refused to give me a single farthing. So

that instead of being a fine lady as I had hoped, my husband was obliged to take me to live with his mother, a proud and very cross old lady, and his sister, who was very ugly and spiteful, and who both disliked me for having been the means of preventing Mr. Donnelly from marrying some one else, who might have been a credit to them.

“They were very poor, and lived in a dirty, miserable, half-starved manner, but with the grandest notions, and keeping up an appearance of style and dignity. They were not kind to me, and I was made in every way to feel that I was a burden and a disgrace.

“I was obliged to submit, for your father had gone to London upon business, and I had leisure to reflect upon my behaviour to my kind, good mother, but it was not until after you were born that I entirely felt how wicked I had been, not until I thought that it would break my heart if you behaved to me as I had behaved to her.

“Your father was unfortunate, and owed more money than he could pay, and we were in great difficulties, but one Christmas my mother persuaded my father to forgive me, and to let her bring me home. You were a little tiny baby and do not recollect our journey to the Cottage, for the inn had been given up to your uncle Simon.

“Your uncle was very kind, for he invited us to live with him, and we were obliged to do so, because we had nowhere else to go, and you were a little baby and took up all my time, so that I was not able to work and earn money as I do now.

“So you see, that after running away from home, in order to be a great lady, I was thankful to come back to the very same house, to be received for charity.

“My dear Clara, recollect that they who will not bear a little, will be obliged to bear a great deal.

“I had felt it a hardship to assist my mother, and to live with her; and now I was obliged to come and live with your aunt Simon, who was not a nice woman, and naturally not pleased to have a whole family to support. I was now very glad to be permitted to sit in the bar, make out the bills, and even to wait upon the guests, by way of repayment,—the very things I had refused to do for my mother,—but no one thanked me for doing them now; there was no mother to love me and call me a comfort to her.

“I hope, my dear Clarissa, you may never know the misery of being ‘dependent;’ if you are earning your own living, nobody can despise you; people may be as insolent as Mrs. Reddesdale was this morning, and you will not mind it;

but if you allow any one to support you (unless it were your father or your husband) after you are old enough to work, it reduces you below the level of a servant, for you are neither respected nor paid wages.

"I worked very hard for Mrs. Simon, but she did not thank me for it.

"I was miserable, and when your papa received an appointment to go abroad, I insisted upon going with him, for although my father would have been friends, and wished me to live with him and my mother, I had suffered so much from living a life of dependence, that I refused, and went to Africa. I do not think I did right. I had grown impatient under my just punishment, and again I ran away from my duty. I left you, my darling, precious child.

"Ah, if you knew how I thought of you, and mourned after you, whilst I was far away! I would thankfully have been a slave to Mrs. Simon for ten years, to have seen you and heard your voice for ten minutes!

"Recollect always, my dear Clara, that if you run away from your post, or endeavour to escape from a duty, recollect that no comfort will follow, but your position will be made worse, and you are besides, actually running away from the relief, that sooner or later always comes to those who are patient and endure to the end. I give you

that, as the experience I have dearly bought at the expence of the happiness of my whole life, and I entreat you to believe it, and to act upon it whenever you are tempted to break loose from the position in life appointed to you. Persevere in doing your duty, and you will not be left to find it intolerable."

Mamma ceased to speak; then taking the lamp from the table, she led me into the next room, and began to undress me without speaking a word; I did not interrupt her, but when she laid me down in bed, I flung my arms round her neck, and squeezing her very tight, I whispered,—

"Mamma, I love you so much!" she kissed me and bade me go to sleep.

I thought over all mamma's story, and I felt very sorry for her, but I could not help being glad that I had a real baronet for my uncle!

## CHAPTER XI.

I HAVE omitted to say that we were frequently receiving hampers, filled with all sorts of good things, from my grandmother; they generally came to us through the means of "Fat Sam," the stage coachman, who had brought us up to London, and who, whilst we lived in the city, was a tolerably frequent visitor; he seemed to consider himself our guardian, and my mother had a great regard for him, and whenever he came, there was sure to be a nice supper, and a clean pipe, with a roll of the tobacco he liked best! she did not like the smell, but she used to say, that allowing him to smoke was the only means of making him feel at home; she always put aside her work upon these occasions, as it would not have done for it to smell of tobacco.

I suppose he liked to come, although it was little he spoke, but he sat looking at my mother, and watching me through the clouds of smoke that curled around him. Once he brought me a doll's kitchen complete, which he declared

was the very picture of the kitchen down at the Cottage.

I suppose everybody has known some time or other the extreme delight of possessing a "doll's house," that most enchanting of childish toys. For myself, I can testify that on the night after my eyes had first rested on the bright red floor and shining array of tiny pots and pans, and all the minature household gods which were ranged in this kitchen, that I did not sleep an hour for thinking of it! Sam afterwards added a set of tea-things, in which mamma made tea for me, but there never was a present that gave me the pleasure of that doll's house. I kept it for years and years, and only the other day I found the little tin frying pan, that had belonged to it, in a drawer full of old relics.

After our removal to Battersea, we did not see Sam so often, it was too far from the place where his coach stopped. One day in the second Spring after we came to London, I had been to spend the day with old Lady Southend, and mamma had been to fetch me home: as soon as we reached the door, the woman of the house told us that some one had been waiting to see us a long time; and in the parlour we found Sam, looking very grave and solemn. "Why, Sam, where have you been that it is so long since we saw you."

Sam pulled out a letter written in the large

stiff crabbed hand of my grandfather; mamma opened it hastily, it was nearly the first she had ever received from him. She sat down, and I looked over her shoulder whilst she read it.

"DEAR GERTRUDE,

"Your mother was taken ill on Tuesday night. Paralysis I am afraid, and the doctor seems to think badly of her case, but we must hope for the best. I should be glad for you to come down and be with her; Missy can come along with you. I shall look for you to-morrow and will send to meet the coach.

"I am, dear Gertrude, your father,

"SIMON MORLEY."

"Oh Sam, Sam, my mother will die!" Why did no one write to me before! Well now, Miss Gertrude, don't take on in that way, may-be things are not so bad. Mrs. Morley has been going down hill this good bit, but those who were with her did not see it so plain as I did, who remember what she used to be when I was a young man—oh, Miss Gertrude, she *was* a woman! and it fairly broke my heart the last time I saw her: she was so pulled down, but she bid me not tell you and I would not have disoblighed her or gone contrary, for the world.

And Sam mopped his head with a pink pocket-handkerchief



"Has she been long ill then? surely you may tell me everything now," said mamma, impatiently.

"No, she did not keep her room, but she was weak and low, and had fancies, but she was afraid of your father, and did not dare to let him know how she was pining for you; but she has talked a deal to me about you and miss here, for she knew I wished her well, and that I would have driven through the worst of roads to serve her. You don't know it, perhaps, but I don't mind telling you now,—when she married Simon Morley, it almost broke my heart; to be sure she had a fair choice, and pleased herself, but if she had taken up with me, you should not have lived away from home in this place. Hey, dear! I think I see her now, sitting by the fire in the bar, and rolling the bank-notes round her wrist, to smooth them, for your father to carry them to the bank. That place has never been the same since she left it."

Whilst Sam was talking, I don't think mamma listened, for she was moving about the room nervously collecting things together; she did not cry, but she looked stunned and bewildered; I felt very sorry to see her unhappy, but I am afraid I rather enjoyed the sudden bustle, and having to help her pack-up, and to run errands for her. I cannot tell how she contrived to arrange everything in so short a time, but by ten o'clock, Sam brought a hackney-coach for us to the door, to

take us to the Sun, where we were to sleep, that we might be upon the spot in the morning, as the coach started at a very early hour.

My grandfather was waiting for us with a light, covered cart; he seemed in his way glad to see us.

"You will find your mother much changed, Gertrude," said he; "but do not let her think you perceive it, for she is in a very low, desponding way."

My mother asked how long she had been ill.

"She has been failing ever since last winter, but I thought she would pick up again when the fine weather came. I have wished of late you were with her, and now you are come you will stop, and no more said about it."

My grandfather began to whistle to himself and whip the horse in an absent way, as if he did not think of what he was about.

I was not allowed to see grandmamma that night, but the next morning I was taken to her, as she sat wrapped up in flannel by the fire in her bed-room. I was quite frightened to see her; she put out her hand and tried to smile, but her face looked so strange, all drawn down on one side, and she could not speak plainly. She signed to mamma to lift me up to kiss her, but I shrank back and put my hands behind me, and I suppose I must have looked as if I did not wish to go near her, for she said, angrily, "put her out,

put her out," and mamma took me and put me outside the room door, and kissed me, and bid me be a good girl and make no noise down stairs.

I never saw grandmamma after that day ; I was left to play about in the garden, and Mary Rivers took care of me ; I scarcely ever saw mamma, for she seldom left grandmamma's room, and she slept at night in what used to be my little room.

Mary Rivers used sometimes to tell me that I had no feeling, to play about as I did whilst grandma' was so ill ; but I could not help it. I am sure I wished she would get well again, that mamma might not be kept away from me as she was every day.

My uncle and aunt Simon came over one day, and my aunt wished to take me back with them, because, she said, a child was in the way ; but I cried so much, that mamma would not send me, and my aunt said I was spoiled and wanted a whipping, and that if I were with her I should have one, which made me all the more afraid of going to see her.

Grandpapa seemed very lost, and went moping about the farm-yard and about the cottage ; he moved from the parlour to the kitchen without settling in either place. He sometimes made me sit down beside him, whilst he smoked and looked into the fire. He tried to make me

read to him, but I was too much in awe of him to read well, and besides, what he set me to read were only stupid things out of his newspaper, which I could not understand, about the price of grain, and the condition of the market. I asked him to explain, as mamma did, but he said I talked too much and was troublesome, and then he took away the paper and said it was plain that I had not made much out of my schooling.

The doctors came every day, but it was all to no purpose, for poor grandmamma died. Mamma took me to see her when she was lying dead. She seemed to have become quite small, like a little child, but her face looked like what I remembered it, and had lost its contortion, and she seemed quietly asleep. Mamma tried to talk to me of death, and told me a great deal about what became of us, but I could only understand about being buried; and when she told me that young as I was I might die like grandmamma, a great dread came upon me, to think that I might die, and that nobody could save me, and that I could escape nowhere: and that evening, I remember, whilst I was playing with my doll's house, the thought that I might die that moment came over me, and I began to scream with terror, but I would not tell anybody what was the matter.

Mamma asked my grandfather to invite Sam

to the funeral, but he asked, "what was the use of doing so, it would only add to the expense;" and Mrs. Simon, who was present, said that "Sam was only a stage-coachman, and she did not see how he could look for an invitation;" but mamma begged very much, and uncle Simon, to please her, took her side, and mamma wrote herself to invite Sam, and gave him a long notice that he might have time to arrange his journey; so Sam came, and seemed more sorry even than grandpapa. He went up-stairs to see the coffin, and I could hear him crying. Grandpapa told mamma afterwards that he was very glad Sam had been invited. I watched the procession as it walked up the Foredrift. It was a cold, rainy day, and I felt dreadfully sorry for poor grandmamma that she had to be buried; and the next day, when the sun shone, and it was pleasant, warm summer weather, it seemed quite cruel that she should be left in the dark ground in the church-yard; but I did not wish for her back again, because now I had mamma all to myself, as I used to have in London.

Mary Rivers said that I ought to feel sorry grandmamma was dead, and that she never saw such an unfeeling child as I was; but though I tried very hard I could not feel unhappy; I cared for nobody in the world except mamma, and now I had her all to myself again.

The next morning after the funeral, as they were sitting at breakfast, Mrs. Simon tried to persuade my grandfather that he ought to give up the cottage, and go and live with them. My grandfather seemed worried, and not to want to talk ; but at last as she persisted, he said that he had promised my grandmother that my mother and I should have a home with him as long as he lived ; and not only so, but he did not want to part with us. Mamma got up and left the room as soon as she could, and grandfather went to see if the gig was ready to come round.

Mrs. Simon seemed in a great rage, and sat fanning herself with her pocket-handkerchief. My uncle stood and looked out of the window, whistling : at last he said,—

“There, you see what you have got, and now I hope you are satisfied—another time you will believe what I tell you.”

Mrs. Simon said my mother was artful and undermining, and gave herself airs that were not to be endured. My uncle gave a little chuckle, as if he were not very sorry, and went away. I was sitting in a corner, reading, and they did not see me, because I was nearly hidden by the sofa.

I told mamma what had passed, and asked her what being “undermining” meant ; but instead of explaining, mamma looked grave and displeased, and said,—

“I am very sorry to see my little girl beginning to be a ‘tatter’ and a ‘busy-body’; it makes a great deal of mischief to repeat to another the observations that may have been made upon them before us; there is something extremely mean in doing so, because by speaking freely before you, people shew *trust* that you will not make a bad use of what you hear. You are only a little girl at present, but you are quite old enough to understand, that if you are allowed to remain in the room when conversation is going on, you must never repeat what you hear. My little girl must learn betimes to be honourable and trustworthy.”

This conversation made a great impression upon me; I have never forgotten it; and as I grew older I saw the importance of what she said. The childish love of talking, to produce an effect and obtain attention, if left unchecked, undermines all solidity of character and sense of honour.

## CHAPTER XII.

MAMMA and I continued to live at the cottage, and grandpapa became much kinder and pleasanter, but I never felt at my ease with him. Mamma had parcels of work sent down to her from London, though she had not any longer the same necessity for working, but I found out afterwards why she did it.

Mamma seemed to me to be quite well, because she was always able to walk about and talk, and never complained. I never thought of her being ill, but one day I was in the kitchen, it was the Autumn of the same year that grandmamma died; and I heard Mary Rivers say to grandpapa,—

“I am sure Mrs. Donnelly is ill, I do not like her looks, she grows thinner every day, you ought to have advice for her.”

My grandfather said, “Pooh, pooh, she is well enough; you women are always setting each other up that you are ill.”

I never shall forget the horror of that moment! it opened a dreadful possibility that I



had never conceived. I ran into the parlour where mamma was sitting, and flinging my arms round her neck,—“Mamma, mamma, are you ill?” I cried vehemently; “Mary Rivers says you are.”

“I am not very strong, my darling, but I hope it will please God to let me get well.”

I looked up into her face with terror; it was as though her own voice had confirmed all my fear; I saw her start at my gaze, and turn aside her head; and I saw the tears running down her cheeks; she stretched her arms to me, and held me close to her heart; at that moment we both admitted the terrible possibility, and I do not think we ever properly hoped again.

I watched mamma narrowly, though I tried not to let her see it; and if she eat with a better appetite than usual, or if she walked a little farther, I was relieved from a great fear which I had not been aware of, until it was for a moment removed.

One day she went out with my grandfather, and neither took me with her, nor told me where she was going, but Mary Rivers told me as a secret, that she was gone to consult the doctor who had visited her on her return home. I looked at her eagerly, but she did not tell me anything; however, as she did not go again, and the doctor did not come to her, I tried not to .

think about it. Whether she would eventually have recovered her strength is doubtful, but I suppose in all cases like hers, some accident always occurs that seems to turn the balance.

One day at the end of October, a fine, clear, mild day, grandpapa drove us in the old yellow gig, to a mill about six miles from the cottage. On our return, it began to rain heavily; grandpapa took a bye road which promised to be shorter; the road was bad, almost impassible, and to mend the matter, he drove against the trunk of a tree that had been left lying in the middle of the road. The gig broke down, but though the horse, accustomed to accidents, stood quite still, and we were none of us hurt, still we were awkwardly situated; we were in an unfrequented place, wet through, and two miles from the nearest shelter; mamma tried to laugh, and made light of it. Grandpapa fastened the horse to a tree, and we made the best of our way across some fields to a farm-house, the rain never ceasing for a moment.

The people at the farm gave us some dry clothes, and made tea for mamma and me; and as the gig was out of the question, the farmer drove us home in his light market cart. But we did not reach home till nine o'clock at night; and Mary Rivers was sending in all directions to see what had become of us.

Mamma never recovered from the fatigue and exposure of that day. A feverish cold set in, which confined her to her room, and she never afterwards left it.

I used to sit with her in the day-time, but the doctor said I was not to sleep with her, for fear of disturbing her. I was not even allowed to sleep in her room. It was the beginning of our separation, but I did not think so, for, strange to say, I felt less uneasy now that she was really ill, than I had done whilst she was vaguely "not well." Child as I was, I rather enjoyed the excitement of waiting upon her, and helping to nurse her. I did not see the change that was taking place in her; there was some good reason given for everything that might have opened my eyes to the real state of things. Even when the old nurse, who had waited upon grandmamma in her last illness, was sent for, it was said to be only because Mary Rivers had more than usual to do in salting down the beef and pork, which always made a great stir in the house at this time of the year; and so I saw old Mrs. Hackett installed as nurse, without thinking anything of it. Mamma talked to me during this illness more than she had ever done before. I did not understand all she said at the time, but I have thought since that she must have had some pre-vision of the difficulties which were to arise for me.

One evening towards the latter end of November, she sat in a large easy chair beside the fire. I had given her her medicine, and was sitting on a footstool at her feet, resting my head upon her knees. The dusk was rapidly thickening, and there was no light but the red gleam of the fire. Mamma had not spoken for some time, but she was smoothing my hair with her hand, and I liked to feel her touch. At last she said, very softly,—

“Dear Clary,”—her voice trembled, and I felt her tears falling upon my neck ; I buried my face under her shawl, and held her knees very fast. “Listen, my darling—it is something we must try to talk about. When I am taken away from you, do not look at it as a strange accident, but try to think that God has taken me to Himself ; and when you are very miserable, you must go to Him, as you come to me, and tell Him everything, and ask Him for whatever you want, and try to love Him as ‘you have loved me. He will be always with you, and will never leave you as I must.

“Will my little girl pray to Him ? and remember, when I am gone, that it is He who has taken me, and that I am in His hands ? Will you think of Him, and live always under the shadow of His presence ?”

“May I talk about you to Him ?” said I, sobbing.

“Yes, my darling, tell Him everything that is in your heart; He will never be weary of you, nor ever fail you, but will send you help and comfort; never doubt Him, my child, for He is faithful, and will be your friend for ever, if you ask Him.”

I was crying too bitterly to be able to answer, and my hair was all wetted through with mamma's tears. I climbed upon her knee, we held each other close, and the arm chair in which she sat, shook with our sobbings: at last my emotion became so uncontrollable that it was heard down stairs, and the old nurse came hastily to see what was the matter. She tried to scold mamma for wasting her strength with talking so much, but she hurried out of the room in the midst of what she was saying, and did not return till we were both more calm; then she said it was time for mamma to go to bed. I lay down on the floor behind her chair, for I could not bear to see any one; when Mary Rivers came to look for me at my usual bed-time, I crept to mamma's bed-side, she was lying quite still and exhausted, her eyes were closed, but the tears were streaming slowly down her cheeks.

“Mamma, mamma, do speak to me!” I cried, with vehemence, for I was terrified to see her lie so still. She opened her eyes, like one roused from a dream, and then fixed them upon me with a strange, long, earnest look, as if she were printing my face upon her mind, holding me the while

at a little distance from her,—“Oh, my Heavenly Father, into thy hands I commend this child!” And then her head fell back upon the pillow, and she lay quite still and pale as before. The nurse whispered to me to go away quietly, and not disturb her.

It seemed to me afterwards, that during that night, I awoke and heard a sound of crying in mamma’s room, and as if furniture were being moved heavily about; but I was so overcome with sleep, that I had no power to move, or to think about what was the matter.

The next morning the house was very still. Mary Rivers had not been in bed, and there was a strangeness altogether which I could not understand. I made haste to dress myself, and ran to mamma’s room. The door was fastened. Mary Rivers came up to me; her eyes were red with crying. She took me up in her arms, and sobbed,—

“Oh, Miss Clary, come away from there; you shall go soon.”

I knew what had happened, though she did not say so, but I hoped it was not true.

“Let me go to mamma—I must see her!”

Mary Rivers began to cry more than ever, and my grandfather, looking very grave and sorrowful, came out of his room.

“Your mamma is dead, child!—she will never come back, or speak to us again!”

I don't know how long it was after that they let me go into her room—not for a long time. Mary Rivers at last took me in; and there, stretched stiff upon the bed, and covered over with a sheet, lay my mother. It was something to be allowed to see her again, and I ran up to put my arms round her neck, as I always did; but the touch, cold and strange, frightened me, although it was my mother's face. I did not cry. Mary Rivers carried me out in her arms. I do not recollect much of what happened afterwards, only I remember watching my opportunity to get into the room again, and sat down on the bed beside where she lay. I did not feel anything; I was stupefied. It was mamma who was lying there before me, and yet it was not mamma,—and sometimes I thought she opened her eyes a little way, and spoke to me in a whisper.

On the chimney-piece there was her medicine, and a paper of lozenges I had brought the day before from the village; the dressing-gown she had worn on the previous evening was folded over the easy chair; so many things seemed to remain as they had been, that I could not believe or understand that all was changed. I sat gazing at everything in the room, until a strange fear took hold of me, and I did not dare to move, though I would have given the world to be down stairs again.

At last Mary Rivers, who had missed me, came to look for me, and took me away, locking the door, and taking the key with her. She was very good to me, and so was my grandfather, but I was like one in a dream. That afternoon my aunt Simon arrived, and I heard say she thought I was going to be an idiot, but the old nurse made me go home with her that evening to her cottage. She recollected my mother when she was a little girl, and talked to me about her, and told me that though I should never see her again in this life, she was gone to be an angel in heaven; and she also told me the most beautiful stories about heaven, and read me a chapter in her old torn dog's-eared Testament, about the golden streets, and the River of Life in the midst of the Eternal City,—and how the inhabitants suffer neither sorrow nor pain, and all tears are wiped for ever from their eyes; and how they live in everlasting light,—and she read to me about the Tree bearing twelve manner of fruits,—and about the angels that have white robes and golden harps,—and how they live happy in the presence of God for ever: she talked a great deal to me, and spoke of mamma having been called to this heavenly state, to live in the presence of the “Great King;” she spoke with so much reality and certainty, that though I cried very much as I listened to her, I was very much comforted,



and I tried to thank God for taking mamma to such a beautiful place ; and the old nurse told me that perhaps mamma could see me, though I did not see her, and would be allowed to be my guardian angel, and watch over me ; I did not know whether this was true, or whether it was only her own notion, but it was a great comfort to me, and made me think quite differently about death, to what I had done when poor grand-mamma was buried. I did not feel afraid at all, I only hoped I should go some day to where mamma was gone, which nurse said I should be sure to do, if I were good and loved God.

When night came, however, and I had to go to bed, the thought that I should never see mamma again, overcame all other feelings. I forgot all about the angels and the Golden City, and could only cry with the passionate grief of a child, who has always hope that its tears will in some way soften its lot, and move the supreme Powers to compassion.

I remained several days with the good old nurse. She let me talk to her about mamma as much as I wished, and she told me about her own three children who died in early childhood, and spoke of them as if they had only gone before her into some grand place, where she was to rejoin them in a very little while.

Although many times in the day I fell into the

same passion of grief at being separated from my mother, yet the time I spent with this old woman not only consoled me then, but had an influence over the whole of my life.

Besides her Testament, she had one book which she had read till she knew it by heart—it was the “Pilgrim’s Progress.” She said it was an “allegory,” but I believed every word of it, and I am not sure that the old woman did not also, for I read it aloud to her, and we talked it over together, and I was glad to think that by this time mamma had seen “Christian” in heaven, and that perhaps he was telling her about his journey to the “celestial city,” whilst I was reading it, and that gave a strange charm to the book.

I should have been very glad if I might have remained with the old nurse altogether, but it was not to be so. At the end of a few days, a message came to say, that my aunt Simon would call and take me up on her way home, and that I must be sure to be ready that very evening.

Mary Rivers came in the course of the day, to wish me good bye. She brought me a piece of mamma’s hair, in a little locket, which she gave me for a keepsake, and put it round my neck with a piece of black ribbon. She told me to be a good girl, and that if I wanted anything I was to write to her. She had become very kind to me. The old nurse gave me her precious

"Pilgrim's Progress." It was long after my usual bed-time when my aunt called for me. The nurse wrapped me in a large cloak, and, too sleepy to be much aware of anything, I was lifted into the chaise, and when we arrived, I just recollect being carried up to bed by a kind looking house-maid, who said I should sleep with her, that I might not be frightened if I awoke in a strange place.

## PART II.

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### CHAPTER I.

I HAVE not a very clear recollection of the first part of the time I spent with my aunt. I recollect being very miserable ; and if ever, for a little while, I began to play, or to feel amused, the remembrance of mamma came upon me like a black curtain dropping suddenly down, and making me feel worse than ever, and sorry for having forgotten her for a single moment. There was nobody who would talk of her to me, nor tell me about her being in heaven ; and after a time, all the comfort I had found at first in saying my prayers, and hoping that mamma heard them, left me. I began not to cry so much, for there was nobody to cry to, and my tears seemed all dried up ; but I had not forgotten her, and I was not comforted, and I never have been, and never shall be in this world. I am a grown woman, and no longer very young, but I feel the loss of

her every day I live, and the older I grow, the more I mourn after her.

I suppose, however, I must have become pretty much like other children in outward appearance, for I recollect hearing my aunt say one day to some visitor, as I was doing some doll's-work in a corner of the room,—

“Oh, yes, she seems to have quite got over her grief. She was a good deal put about at first; but children so soon forget.”

“Ah, poor child!” said the visitor; “she is not old enough to understand her loss. It is a great disadvantage to girls when their mothers die. Do you think her father will marry again?”

“I don't know what he intends to do,” said my aunt, tossing her head, “and I am sure I do not care. He has not written to *us* since he came back, and I suppose anybody who will may burden themselves with the child.”

I do not suppose either my aunt or her visitor believed that I could understand what they said, or else they would have sent me out of the room. I wished they had done so, for they made me more unhappy than I was before.

As time passed on, and my father did not write or make his appearance, my situation at my aunt's became much more uncomfortable. At first I was always in the nursery with my cousins, a own age, and a little boy, a year

younger. The nurse obliged me to give way to them in everything, and yield the most profound submission to their tyrannical tempers, for they were both as spoiled as children could be. All the mischief that was done was laid at my door, and I was constantly in disgrace with the nurse, who gave her own version of me to my aunt. She treated me very roughly, and grumbled at everything she had to do for me. She kept saying that she was imposed upon; that she had never bargained to take charge of me, and she would not; and one day she took me in her hand and went down stairs into the bar, when my aunt was very busy, and made a long speech, and ended by declaring that she would either have increased wages, or that I should be removed from her nursery.

Mrs. Simon was in one of her very bad tempers, but the nurse did not care for that, because she knew my aunt did not wish to part with her, and that she was rather afraid of her besides.

"Clarissa is a very naughty child," said my aunt, peevishly, "and I will whip her as soon as I have leisure. There has been no comfort in the house since she came—she sets a bad example to the others, and shall be sent away. I will tell you what you shall do, nurse: move all her things out of the children's drawers, and let her sleep with Molly Curzon, the house-maid; and I desire

she may not go into the nursery at all, if she cannot play with her cousins without my hearing all these complaints. I declare I am worried out of my life with one thing or another; and now go away, both of you, for I am very busy."

The nurse was only half satisfied with her success; but she withdrew, and lost no time in removing all that belonged to me up to the house-maid's room, and bidding me not to set foot in her nursery unless I were invited.

The house-maid was the same good-natured woman who had carried me up to bed the first night of my arrival. She was a black-haired, rather coarse-looking woman, and, I remember, wore large gold ear-rings with long pendants. She was very kind to me, and did not grumble at having me with her; but she was too busy to take much charge of me, and I was left to wash, and dress, and take care of myself as I could.

Under my mother's teaching, I had been accustomed to employ myself regularly. I had not pleasure enough in learning lessons to take to those when I was not obliged, still the habit of employment clung to me. I used to go round the rooms with the house-maid, and fancy I was helping her, and very proud I felt when she said I had been of any use; and the cook used to let me help her to shell peas, or strip currants, and stand by her whilst she made pastry, and gene-

rally gave me something to make a little pie for my doll, which she baked with the others. I called this "my work," and fancied myself obliged to do it before I began to play.

Considering the condition in which I was at that time, this sort of occupation was the best that could have been devised to restore me to a healthy state of cheerfulness. I have been the better ever since for the taste I then acquired for household duties. Certainly my proficiency was not much more than childish play, yet I acquired a notion of being helpful, and a facility in making use of my hands which has never left me.

There is one observation I would make here, not that it is very profound, but my own experience has given it a certain emphasis to my mind. It is, that no circumstances in which we may be thrown by the natural course of Providence, however unfavourable they may seem, ever do us any real harm. They will always be found to have a tendency to develope, or strengthen, some quality peculiarly needed in our character. I am not, of course, speaking of deep afflictions and bereavements, like what I had sustained in the death of my mother, those are things neither to be weighed nor measured, they are sent upon us by the will of the Highest, and we must endure them as best we may.



I am only speaking of the ordinary environments amongst which our life is cast, without any choice of our own.

To be thrown entirely amongst servants, as I was at this time, does not look at all a desirable thing for a child. Yet when I think of the kind of child I was, with my susceptibility and intense desire to please those I was with ;—notice, praise, or even the ordinary attention that pretty, lively children generally attract, were stimulants stronger than I could bear. There was no longer my mother to curb me with judicious love, and it is my belief, that the profound neglect and indifference with which it was at that time my lot to be treated,—made to feel that I was not of the smallest consequence to any living being,—acted like a salutary frost, and deadened the growth of a self-consciousness which, when it prevails, eats all the strength out of a character, and induces a tendency to exaggeration and insincerity.

This was, in my case, an essential advantage, that counterbalanced the obvious impropriety of being allowed to run wild as I did ; but the ill effects that must, as I grew older, have flowed from associating with uneducated servants, was averted by a circumstance, which led to somewhat curious results.

One day, as I was standing in the kitchen at the dresser, beside the cook, who was shewing

me how to make "a raised pie," a respectable, elderly woman passed through, and stopped to speak to me. She patted my head, and said "she saw I was a great favourite with the cook." I saw her afterwards in conversation with the house-maid, and they both looked at me as if it were of me they were talking.

That same evening, I was playing in the long passage that led to the other side of the house.

One of the parlour-doors opened, and the person who had spoken to me in the morning, came out and invited me to go in. At first I held back, for my aunt had strictly enjoined me never to go near any of the company. However, I allowed myself to be persuaded at last, and going in, I saw a middle-aged lady, with long, fair ringlets, and dressed in black satin, and a thick gold chain, sitting before a tea-table, and reading.

"I have brought you a little visitor, Miss Archer," said my companion.

"Oh, what a pretty, darling little creature!" cried the lady, who flung down her book, and started up to receive me, kissing me with the greatest vivacity.

"What is your name, my darling, and where do you live?"

"Oh, she belongs to the house; Mrs. Morley is her aunt. But they are not kind to her, as far as I can learn."

"Poor darling," said the lady, kissing me again; "and for whom is she in such deep mourning?"

"For her mother," replied the other, lowering her voice.

I suppose my face must have changed, for I could not bear to hear my mother alluded to.

"What sensibility she has!" cried the lady; "and what a distinguished-looking child!"

"Yes; it is quite a shame they should neglect her as they do. The poor child is lost for want of somebody to take care of her. The house-maid has been telling me that her aunt will not allow her to be in the nursery with her own children."

"You shall stop and drink tea with me," said the lady. And as I expressed my fears of my aunt, she sent her maid, whose name was Nokes, to say that she was keeping me with her.

She asked me many questions, and encouraged me to talk,—it seemed to amuse her. I told her about mamma—it was so seldom I had a chance of speaking of her—and I dare say I talked a great deal more than I should have done. By bedtime—and I was allowed to sit up in general as late as I chose—the lady had learned from me all I knew about myself. She made me read to her, though I did not understand one word in her book, and I repeated some pieces of poetry her. But at last my aunt sent for me.

She was in the nursery, and looked very cross.

"I have told you, miss, that you are never to go into the rooms where there is company. You are a naughty, forward girl! and I am very angry with you. But what I want to say is, that I have lost my large, yellow brooch, and you were seen to come out of my bed-room to-day. Go and fetch it directly, or I must whip you."

"I did not know you had lost your brooch, aunt, I have not touched it."

"You were seen in my room, where you had no business; go and find it directly."

I had never touched the brooch, not even seen it, and as to having been in her room, where I had strict injunctions never to penetrate, I had on that morning been playing with my ball in the passage before her door, which stood open; my ball fell a little way inside, and I fetched it back, shutting the door afterwards; the nurse, who was coming towards the nursery, had seen me apparently coming out, hence the circumstantial evidence. It was in vain that I attempted to explain, my surprise and confusion at the charge, gave me, no doubt, an air that looked like guiltiness to one unacquainted with the ways of children. I was too much afraid of my aunt to deny it boldly. All I said, which was with faltering and tears, was treated by her

as a falsehood ; and confirmed in her suspicions by my manner, she threatened to call my uncle, of whom I stood still more in awe ; I began to cry bitterly, and begged she would not. But as I could neither offer to go and find the brooch, nor confess that I had taken it, her patience was soon exhausted, and the rod, which was kept in the nursery for a terror to my cousins, but never used, was brought down, and I was severely whipped, in spite of my promises "to be good ;" my two little cousins stood looking on with the pleasure natural to all children when they see another punished.

I was sent to bed with the promise, that if I did not find the brooch, I should be brought before my uncle. This threat was terrible, and yet I did not see how I was to escape from it. I cried myself to sleep, but not until I had almost begun to fancy that I must have been guilty without knowing it. The next morning, however, the missing brooch was found ; it had caught in a fold of the dressing-table cover, and fell down on the table being removed. My aunt made no apology for having falsely accused me, but rather professed to think I had taken that mode of restoring it, as she declared she had carefully searched for it everywhere, before speaking to me. It was such a relief to my mind to know that it was found, that I did not feel the

great injustice with which I had been treated. If the brooch had not been discovered, and my aunt had persisted in accusing me, and had whipped me again, I am confident that I should have confessed whatever she desired, and my imagination might without much difficulty have been wrought upon to doubt my own innocence. That day was destined to be a very memorable one for me.

The lady in number four, with whom I had drunk tea on the previous evening, sent a polite message, begging my aunt to give her a few minutes' conversation.

Mrs. Nokes asked me if I would like to go and live with Miss Archer, her mistress. I thought she was joking, and said I did not know; the fact was, I was so bewildered, that I did not know what to say, not being sure that I might not be punished if I said the wrong thing. I heard Mrs. Nokes telling the house-maid, who was always my friend, that her mistress had taken quite a fancy to me, and wished to adopt me.

Mrs. Nokes was a tall, thin, middle-aged woman, with very black eyes and hair, a large nose, and rather a formal, solemn manner of speaking. She was dressed in a high, brown stuff gown, and black silk apron, with a white lace collar, and cap.

The house-maid was engaged in setting Miss

Archer's room to rights, and Mrs. Nokes sat down in the easy chair, and taking me upon her lap, settled herself for a comfortable gossip; by way of giving it a face of employment, she professed to stitch a tucker in one of her mistress's dresses.

Children all like listening to the talk of grown-up people amongst each other, and understand and recollect much more than is suspected, but even when they do not understand they like to listen.

The house-maid enquired from what part of the country they came.

"I am not one who likes to gossip and to repeat things that pass in the family," said Mrs. Nokes, with an air of reproof, "but at the same time, as my mistress's story is well-known in our part of the country, I do not see any wrong in telling it.

"We come from the north of England, in the neighbourhood of Lancaster,—a very beautiful county, I assure you, ma'am. Miss Archer's father was a barrister. He came of a very good family, but dreadfully poor; and he did not make much by his practice. Indeed, between ourselves, they were pinched to live. I was in business as a dress-maker, and I know all that was said of them in the town. But for all that, they were proud, and held their heads as high as the highest.

Miss Archer had several offers, but the old people would not look through the window at any one in trade. However, at last a fresh clergyman came to the town,—a sweetly elegant young man, very pale, with beautiful black hair, and hands as white as a lady's; and his sermons were the most beautiful I ever heard. All the young ladies used to go to church every day in the week, and they all admired him,—one more than another; but the only one he cared for was Miss Archer; they could not marry however, because they were both too poor. He hoped to receive promotion, but it never came, and they were engaged for three years, and I think he got tired of waiting. At last, Miss Archer's father broke it off, and then the young man went straight to Cheltenham, and married, in less than two months, a fat old lady, who had just come over from India, with a great heap of money. She was old enough to be his mother; but she bought him a chapel, and he is quite a grand person now, and rides about in his carriage. Miss Archer felt it very much; it was a great disrespect to do it so suddenly, and she was greatly hurt. Six months after this, an uncle of Mr. Archer's—a great miser, and worth a mine of money—died, leaving all his fortune to Miss Archer, who was his god-daughter. The money came too late. She behaved very hand-



somely to the old people, and engaged me for her maid, and I gave up my connection to come with her; and we travel about, six months in one place, two months in another. We shall neither of us ever marry. I have had my share of sorrow too, and been deceived where I most confided."

"Ah, dear!" said the house-maid, with a sigh; "women can feel for women; sweethearts are slippery things—there is no trusting any of them! There is our Joe the ostler, now——"

A violent ringing of a bell caused her to start and hurry away, exclaiming,—

"Well, I am afraid I shall catch it for being so long in this room!"

I had listened attentively to all that had been said, and the word "miser" had struck me. I could not imagine more than one in the world, and looked up in her face, and said,—

"Was that miser, who left the money, Mr. Bateman?"

"Why, what should you know about him?" replied Mrs. Nokes, with surprise.

"Oh, I recollect him very well. I went once to drink tea at his house. Grandpapa used to know him. He had a room full of curiosities, which were nasty old things he had picked up in the roads."

"To be sure, and so he had! Well, this is

what Miss Archer calls a 'caw-incidence !' But there is her bell, and I must go."

I followed her, for I was afraid of being seen by my aunt coming from the room. At the top of the stairs I met the nurse, who was looking for me. She took me into the nursery, washed me, and combed my hair, and afterwards dressed me in some of my cousin's clothes. I wondered what it was all for; but children live as in a dream, and are never surprised at those sort of things. After it was done, my aunt came and spoke quite pleasantly to me. She told me I was to go away with Miss Archer, who was taking me to live with her, and said I must be sure and be very good.

When the house-maid, who had been always kind to me, heard that I was going away, she began to cry, and all the servants began to talk about it amongst themselves. I heard the house-maid say that it was a great shame to send me away amongst strangers, and that my aunt only did it that she might get all the money for her own, but that I should have all the luck of the family, the children who were persecuted always had!

They all made me a present of something, for a keepsake. I was sorry to leave them, for they had been good to me, and I promised I would never forget them. My uncle, who had been

shut up along with my aunt and Miss Archer all the morning (settling about me, I suppose), called me to him and shook hands with me, and said he supposed I should have boarding-school manners when I came back, and then he gave me a guinea, and walked off whistling to his dogs. Miss Archer's carriage had been standing at the door a long time—I was lifted in, and we drove off!

## CHAPTER II.

IT may seem somewhat surprising that my relatives should have transferred me, at a moment's notice, to the possession of Miss Archer, as if I had been some little kitten or puppy dog, for which she might have expressed a fancy ; but, in the first place, I did not seem to belong now to any one in particular, and my aunt was not sorry to get me off her hands in any way that promised to provide for me ; and, to do her justice, having lived in a little country place all her life, the idea that Miss Archer could possibly be other than she represented herself, never entered her head. My uncle was willing to let things take their chance, and, if his wife saw no harm in it, neither did he. Country people are dull and obstinate in notions they have once taken up, and very slow to admit new ones—thirty years ago more so than they are at present.

As to me, my most immediate impression was the pleasure of riding in a carriage, which I was particularly fond of doing. Children have not their perceptions awake except to what is imme-

diately before them, and I did not at all realize that I was going away amongst strangers for good.

Our first course was to the Cottage, to see my grandfather, that he might give his sanction to what had been done.

As soon as we had cleared the town, Miss Archer, having settled herself comfortably in a corner of the carriage, and deposited her book, and her reticule, and her smelling-bottle, and her elaborately embroidered pocket-handkerchief, on the seat before her, where she could easily reach them, and arranged the foot-stool to her satisfaction, turned round and looked at me with great complacency, sitting by her side.

"Dear child!" said she, "and will you learn to love me, now I have you all to myself, and let me be your mamma? Ah, Nokes, I shall no longer lead a joyless existence, now that I have this sweet child to educate, who will grow up to love me in my old age!"

Nokes, who was sitting in the small portion of the front seat, left vacant by her mistress's moveables, enveloped in a large black silk cloak, made a kind of sympathetic face, and said she hoped I should be a good girl, and be grateful for all the blessings that were going to be conferred on me, and grow up to be a comfort to Miss Archer.

"And to you, too, Nokes; for I intend to edu-

cate her to love you, and to look upon you as her friend."

"I hope she will think herself very fortunate in meeting with such a benefactress!" said Nokes.

And so just at that moment I did; I felt delighted to drive back to the Cottage in a grand carriage, with the prospect of riding in it every day of my life; it was like a story-book come true!

When we reached the town near which my grandfather lived, I looked up at the windows of Mrs. Butler's school, and saw the heads of all the girls looking out. I nodded to them, though I only recognised Annie Matley. I tried not to feel proud, because I had been told it was wrong, so I felt condescending instead.

It was market day, and the little square, brick, market hall was quite filled with the country people, and their baskets of eggs, and poultry, and so forth. They all came to look out at our carriage, which I knew was much grander than anything they saw from one month's end to another, except at election times. Just below Mrs. Butler's house, the horses took fright at a heap of crockery spread out on some straw, and became restive, some part of the harness gave way, and they were obliged to be taken out. Mrs. Butler came up to the window courtseying,

and entreating us to alight and rest in her house.

I had told Miss Archer I used to go to school there, so she consented, and we all went in. Everything was just as I had last seen it, and Mrs. Butler was in the act of baking; she made many apologies for being caught in such an untidy state, but everything was very clean and comfortable.

In a little time, we heard the voices of the girls singing up stairs; it was a regular custom, when any visitors came, to set the girls to sing hymns, it sounded innocent and pleasant, and gave a great notion of the unity and sisterly affection amongst the girls. I recollected that this had happened several times whilst I was there, and how I had more than once had my ears boxed because, though I sang loud and with great good will, it was not at all in tune, and spoiled the effect! As I sat now, in the parlour-kitchen, and the voices came down the crooked stairs, I felt myself in quite a superior position.

Mrs. Butler, who had always been kind to me, and who really was glad to see me again, praised me, however, to Miss Archer, for much goodness I had never been praised for whilst at school; and Miss Butler, who had now joined us, dressed in her best light blue lustre, and coral necklace (which I am sure she had put on after our

arrival, as she never went so fine every day), told Miss Archer that I was the cleverest pupil she ever had, and that it was quite a pleasure to teach me.

In about ten minutes, the post-boys sent to say that the carriage was all right; but we could not so soon escape from Mrs. Butler's hospitality, and a long story about the last days of Mr Bateman, on which she had embarked, in consequence of an enquiry from Miss Archer.

Annie Matley was sent for down stairs, to speak to me, she looked extremely shy and awkward, and I could not believe she had ever pinched me or tyrannized over me.

At last, in about half-an-hour, Miss Archer was resolute to depart; she begged a half-holiday for the girls, and left half-a-guinea with Mrs. Butler to give them a treat into the country.

When we turned down the Foredrift to drive to the Cottage, Miss Archer was loud in her praises of its taste and neatness, and was full of admiration for everything she saw; and certainly the Cottage, with its cheerful, yellow-washed walls, in its ample garden, and neat farm-yard, with the dark, hanging wood of Chetley Park in the back-ground, made as pretty a rural scene as I have ever beheld.

Mary Rivers came out of the dairy at the noise of wheels, with her arms up to the elbows



in cheese curds, and very much astonished, not to say daunted, at the dazzling appearance of the carriage; her surprise at seeing me in it was extreme. I told Miss Archer who she was, and we were shewn across the hall into the sitting-room, which smelt of tobacco as usual; but as Miss Archer could not bear the smell, we went out at the front door, which was unfastened on purpose for us, into the garden; Nokes remained behind to make acquaintance with Mary Rivers, and a messenger was dispatched to the fields to find my grandfather.

I shewed Miss Archer everything with great pride, I took her into the dairy, and shewed her the fish pond and the stables. At last, as we came back, we heard my grandfather's voice speaking very roughly, and refusing to put on his best Sunday clothes, saying he was quite good enough as he was, and then we heard Mary Rivers saying it was shame he would not shew himself in black like a Christian; and when we entered the kitchen-door we saw my grandfather standing in the greasy old snuff-coloured coat in which he went after the farm.

As soon as he perceived us, he made a sort of bow to Miss Archer, and said, "your servant, ma'am;" he shook hands with me, and was much more polite than I had ever seen him. He en-  
if we had been offered any refreshment,

and Mary Rivers motioned to him to take us into the parlour, and said she would hasten dinner.

When they went, I was following, but Mary Rivers called me back to keep her company. Mrs. Nokes, who was in the chimney-corner, had perhaps, told her the business we were come upon. She asked me many questions about what I had done at my aunt's, and I told her everything, and was quite proud to let her see how handy I could be. She tossed her head and muttered to herself, I could not hear what she said, but she seemed vexed, and began to beat some eggs in a basin, with such force that the basin broke.

When I went into the parlour, to help her lay the cloth, Miss Archer was sitting in my grandfather's old chair, opposite to him, and talking away, as if she had known him all her life.

They were talking about old Mr. Bateman, and my grandfather was telling her who he had married, and what part of the country he had come from, and what his father was,—for my grandfather was very fond of settling who people's relations were, and knowing where they came from; and before dinner was over, he had, as he expressed it, learned from Miss Archer “all about her pedigree.”

When I entered, Miss Archer held out her hand to me, and said,—

"Ah, this dear little girl! Mrs. Rivers, I am going to take her away from you! Her grandfather has consented to let me adopt her. She is to be my child, and I shall bring her up to cheer me in my old age. I shall have an object of affection that will not disappoint me!"

Mary Rivers set down the salt-cellar, and looking at my grandfather, said, sharply,—

"What is all this about? What are you going to do with the child? She is your own flesh and blood, and you have no right to hand her over to anybody that will have her, as if she were like a negro-slave. I don't think it is right. I am only a servant, to be sure, but I cannot help speaking my mind. She is your own daughter's own child, and I don't see why she is to be trod upon and pushed on one side, to make room for them as is no nearer to you!"

My grandfather was afraid of Mary Rivers; she always spoke to him as she pleased, and did not care for his ill-temperers. Miss Archer looked from one to the other, surprised, and I only understood that Mary Rivers was taking my part.

"I assure you, my good Mrs. Rivers——" began Miss Archer.

"What is the woman talking about!" interrupted my grandfather, roughly. "Look sharp, and bring dinner!—She has been in the family many years," he said, by way of apology, when

she was gone ; “ but she is like all women, sadly too fond of talk. No offence, ma’am ? ”

After dinner, Miss Archer begged that the carriage might be brought round. Mary Rivers came into the parlour, and said she wanted to know what was going to be done to me, and where I was going to be taken to.

“ My good Mrs. Rivers,” said Miss Archer, in a sentimental and somewhat cajoling voice, “ I am rich and lonely ; the best feelings of my heart have been wounded ; and in the society of this dear child I shall find an object on which I may safely expend all the shut up sympathies of my nature. I shall assure myself of something to love me in my old age. Set your mind at ease about her lot : I will educate and provide for her as if she were my own ; and I will keep Mr. Morley always informed of her welfare.”

“ Well,” said Mary Rivers, gruffly, “ it is no concern of mine ;—but right is right ; and if you adopt a child to-day, you cannot throw her off to-morrow. It is not a little that provides for one ; and it is natural to be doubtful when its lawful relations grudge taking care of it.”

“ Your feelings do you credit,” said Miss Archer.

My grandfather was, I think, afraid that Miss Archer might be induced to run off her proposal by Mary Rivers and her blunt suspicions, so he said that he was not going to

stand in the child's light, and that if Madam Archer chose to take me, and make a lady of me, he did not see what better could befall me, and he supposed it was what my mother would have liked for me.

"Well," said Mary Rivers, wiping the table violently with the corner of her apron; "it is not for me to say anything, only it does not seem natural to send your own grandchild to strangers in this fashion, as if you had not plenty of money of your own, and more than you can spend if you live a hundred years. But I have done, I say no more!"

"I am glad of it; for I think you have said plenty as it is," replied my grandfather, taking his pipe, which he broke in his vexation.

I began to be afraid that Miss Archer would be angry at all this quarrelling, and leave me behind, either with my grandfather, who was so cross that he frightened me, or else to go back to my aunt's, which I disliked still more, so I put my hand in Miss Archer's, and said,—

"I will go with you, if I may."

Miss Archer called me a "dear child," and gave me a number of kisses.

My grandfather looked as if he wished the matter were ended any way, and Mary Rivers only said,—

"Hum, I don't wonder at the poor thing!"

My grandfather said, as if out of patience,—

“Well, all I can say is, that if you, ma’am, have a fancy for the child, and she is willing to go, you are welcome to take her, as far as my leave goes. Of course, there is her father somewhere or other, but I don’t think he will ever be a hinderance. But understand, that if you take her, you take her; there must be no returning her on our hands, when she is half made into a fine lady, and neither fish nor fowl.”

“I willingly agree to that,” said Miss Archer; “I take the responsibility of her upon myself, and I am delighted to find that no one will have a right to interfere in my management of her. And now, worthy sir, we will take our departure, with thanks for your kind entertainment and consent.”

Nokes came to say that the carriage was at the door.

“Well,” said my grandfather, “good-bye, Clary, you have got a good shop now, so mind you are a good girl and behave well, to be a credit to your bringing up; and may be, madam here will let you write a time by chance, to let us know how you go on.”

“I pledge you my word for that,” said Miss Archer.

I put my face up to give him a kiss, but he patted my head instead, and said,—

"There, there, that will do ;" and he put two half-crowns into my hand, for pocket-money.

Mary Rivers kissed me and stuffed something into my other hand, and bid me, in a whisper, be sure and write to her as soon I arrived at my new home, and tell her all about it.

Nokes gave directions to the post-boys, and we drove off. I looked out of the window as we went away, and the last thing I saw was Mary Rivers, sitting on the horse block and crying, with her check apron over her head, and my grandfather turning to go into the house.

## CHAPTER III.

WE slept one night on the road, and the next, at eight o'clock, arrived at the little town of Bradwood, where Miss Archer had taken up her abode.

Hers was a handsome, substantial, red-brick house, at the entrance of a shady lane, a few yards apart from the high road, looking across towards the town.

"Now, my dear child, we are at home!" cried Miss Archer, kissing me; "and I hope you will be very happy, and love me as if I were your mother come back to you again."

If she only would not have said the last part of her speech!—but it hurt me, and I hung down my head without reply. Mrs. Nokes carried me off, to shew me the pretty little white bed in the corner of her room, where I was to sleep, and as she brushed my hair and made me a little tidy, to go down to tea, she told me I must be a good girl and do all that Miss Archer bid me, and learn to love her, and, above all, must not seem sorry or out of spirits; and then she kissed me, and led



me by the hand to the parlour-door, where Miss Archer was sitting at the tea-table, in a nice comfortable little room, with a cheerful fire burning. On looking round I saw a portrait of old Mr. Bateman, in his brown bob-wig and snuff-coloured coat, just as I recollected him! I was delighted to see a face I knew in a strange place. Portraits to children are very puzzling things—at least they were to me—and even now I look at them with a certain awe, not sure how much of the individual's consciousness has been transferred to it: but perhaps the children in these days are taught better than I was, and are surprised at nothing.

Miss Archer laid aside her book, although it was the third volume of a novel, and devoted herself to talking to me, and trying to make me feel at home: and now that old Mr. Bateman was hanging on the wall, there was a great deal to talk about and to tell her, and the tea passed pleasantly enough, only I felt a certain constraint with her, wondering whether I was doing and saying what she wished. After tea, I was tired and sleepy, and wanted to go to bed, but she wanted to nurse me and to play with me, and offered to tell me a tale, which generally would have been a great pleasure, but now I was tired to the degree of feeling cross, and at last I said, fretfully,—

"My own mamma always let me go to bed when I was tired—she put me to bed her own self."

"Well, well, you shall go then ; but little girls should not speak so fretfully when grown-up people are so good as to try to amuse them."

I was afraid she would take me herself, which I did not want at all, but she rang the bell and gave me to Nokes. I did not want her to be angry or vexed at me, and when I found she was not coming with me, I gave her a kiss of my own accord. The next morning the sun was shining brightly; I got up early, dressed myself softly, not to disturb Nokes, and went out into the garden to look about me, and I was quite delighted at the beautiful place I had come to.

It was a large, red brick house, with a triangular elevation in the front ; there were stables and out-houses at the back. The garden was much larger than the one at the Cottage, and there was an orchard, and a field separated from it by a white paling, which particularly took my fancy.

One end of the house was covered with a magnificent pear-tree, whilst jasmine, monthly roses, and clematis were trained over the front of the house. The stables and out-houses were overgrown with ivy and American creeper, till the old clock was almost lost amongst them. The

garden-gate opened into the lane, but it was so near the road, that we could easily see all who passed by, though they could not see us, on account of the large chesnut-trees at each side of the white gate, and the thick hedge that separated us from the road.

A splendid, copper-coloured beech, the first I had ever seen, spread like a canopy in the midst of the lawn. The garden was kept in beautiful order, and the gravel walks were as smooth and close as boards.

As I was looking about, I saw the man servant going into the field to milk the cows, and I asked him to let me go too. At first he seemed afraid that Miss Archer might not like it, but I ran before him without minding. They were two beautiful Alderney cows, of a delicate dun colour, and they looked so pretty, that I insisted on trying to milk one myself, which the animal did not understand, and kicked me and the milking-stool down, and the milk itself had a narrow escape, my frock was torn, of course, and stained with the mark of the wet grass.

However, I made acquaintance with the cook, and went along with her to the dairy, where she gave me a cup of the new milk, and a piece of bread, for I began to be hungry. Miss Archer had given orders that I was to breakfast with and she never rose till late.

Whilst I was in the dairy, Nokes had been looking for me in all directions ; Miss Archer had desired that I might be taken into her bed-room before she got up. When Nokes found me amusing myself very much, she gave me a little shake, and said I must come and wish Miss Archer good morning, and that I had no business ever to get up until she came to call me. I was rather sorry, but went without saying anything ; Miss Archer was in bed reading, and her room was very close, and disagreeable, after the fine, fresh morning air in the garden.

She made me get upon the bed to her, and she kissed me, and asked why I had not come to her before. She would not let me go down again, but made me sit upon the bed, that she might talk to me all the time that Nokes was dressing her.

One thing was very kind of her, she did not scold me for tearing my frock, which Mary Rivers and my aunt always used to do.

It was Sunday morning, although I did not know it, and we had to go to church. Nokes washed me, and dressed me in my best frock, which had belonged to one of my cousins, and which was hardly mourning at all, whilst my bonnet was deep black crape, which troubled her a good deal, and she tried to persuade Miss Archer to leave me at home until she should

have had time to make me fit to be seen ; but I wanted to go to church, and Miss Archer wanted to take me, so we did not care for what Nokes said about "consistency." I was in hopes we were going to walk, but the carriage came round quite grand, and we drove there, although it was not a mile to the church door.

I was very fond of going to church, and hearing the organ ; mamma used always to take me as long as she was able to go herself, but at my aunt's I never went at all.

The church of Bradwood stood upon a rising ground, in the midst of a green and pleasant church-yard ; from which we could see the country for several miles round, and the Elvington Woods in the distance, which looked beautiful. The church itself was a small, plain, stone building, but it had a steeple built of planks of wood wrapped over each other, and painted white, "shingle," they called it, with a fine gilt weathercock at the top. The inside of the church was rather dark, the pews were all of very dark shining oak, and lined with green baize, whilst round the walls were several large marble monuments, with angels blowing trumpets, or else of ladies leaning over tombstones. I tried to listen to the sermon, which Nokes whispered to me was preached for the funeral of a young lady who had been burned to death ; but though I listened with all my

night, and really hoped to hear something about heaven and the Celestial City, yet I could not understand anything that was said,—I suppose because it was preached to grown-up people. I was very tired, and I am sure did not behave well, for I kept getting up and down on the seat, and scratched Miss Archer's silk dress with my finger-nails, to hear the rustle, till, at last, she made me sit down on the hassock, and rest my head against her knee, which I did, and soon was fast asleep.

As we went out of church, a great many persons came up and spoke to Miss Archer, and asked who was the pretty child with her. Miss Archer seemed pleased that they thought me pretty, and said to everybody that I was a little orphan whom she had adopted, and was going to educate herself. All the elderly ladies nodded their heads, and said,—

“Ah, it will be a nice resource for you!”

I wondered what they meant; but we got into the carriage again, and were soon at home. I rather expected to be scolded for my behaviour at church; but I was not. Nokes only said, that it was a long time for a child to be obliged to sit still, and I felt very much obliged to her.

After dinner, I brought my “Pilgrim's Progress,” and asked Miss Archer to tell me about the “Celestial City;” but she said that it was

only a dream, and that I must not believe it, for that dreams were foolish things ; and she made me learn some of the Church catechism, and a collect ; and then she read me a story about a good little boy, who died when he was quite a child ; and who was so afraid of being vain, that he cried when his parents bought him new clothes, and would not be pacified until they had cut off all the pretty buttons. She said it was quite true, and better for me than make-belief tales ; but I did not care about it. I asked her to tell me some tales out of the Bible, and those were a great deal better ; but she would not read to me about the angels with golden harps, and “ the tree of life,” because, she said, it was written in a part of the Bible that children could not understand. But when I began to cry, she took me on her knee, and said she would read it, if I would give over crying.

She took me a little walk in the garden, but would not let me play about, because it was Sunday ; and I might not read anything but the book which had about the little boy in it, and it was full of stories about good children, who all died young, and were one better than another ; but as it did not tell us about their lives, nor what they did every day, I got very tired of it, was very glad when it was bed-time. At  
when I knelt down to say my prayers, she

took great pains to tell me that mamma could not hear me nor see me, and she seemed quite shocked that I should think of such a thing. This distressed me very much ; but after I was in bed, I made up my mind that I would go on believing that mamma watched over me.

I was between nine and ten years old when I first went to Miss Archer, but tall and well-grown for my age ; those who had known my mother, always said I was very like her,—only instead of having golden hair like hers, mine was jet black. I had dark blue eyes, and long black eyelashes, coming quite upon my cheek when I closed them. I had also a beautiful complexion, like my mother's, which, as I have said, struck me so much the first time I saw her. I had grown so much accustomed to hearing strangers remark me as a beautiful child, that I took it quite as a matter of course ; but I do not think, in those days, that I was vain about it, because it had never made anybody kind to me.

The morning after we had made our appearance at church, Miss Archer expected visitors, and prepared to receive them.

Nokes dressed me betimes in my best worked white frock and black sash, and I was bid to sit down on a little stool by the fire-place, beside Miss Archer.



A tray of refreshments, consisting of wine and cake, was set out upon the table, and Miss Archer took up some knitting. We had only just taken our places, when the first visitor was announced.

It was Miss Prudamore, who had the reputation of being a most superior woman ; but I took a great dislike to her from the first. She had a sententious, sentimental way of speaking, and shook her head at the end of every sentence, to give it an unction. I was told to get up and shake hands with her, and Miss Archer told her that she had adopted me, in order that she might have something to love her.

“ Ah ! ” said Miss Prudamore—“ how much better than wasting your affections on cats and dogs ! I often wonder that women of fortune, who are without domestic ties, do not oftener adopt this course,—so much good might be effected. Of course you will educate her to earn her own living when she grows up ? ”

Miss Archer replied she had not thought about it.

“ But,” rejoined the other, “ unless you intend to give her a fortune, it will be quite false kindness to bring her up in comfort and expectations. I know what reverses are, and how hardly they  
“ 14, unless a child be taught to forbode them,  
ould prepare her betimes to meet with  
aths.”

"Oh, good gracious!" said Miss Archer; "I am sure I hope she will never meet with any. I only wish to make the dear child happy, and to teach her to love me."

Miss Prudamore shook her head, and sighed,—

"Ah! how little I ever expected to be in my present position! You should bring her up with chastened hopes."

An elderly lady, in a magnificent, flowered shawl, and thick gold chain, and whose voice was like that of a cat calling her kittens, looked at me through her eye-glass, and said,—

"So that is the little girl you have adopted. I hope she will be very good, and grow up to be a comfort to you, considering what a benefactor she has found in you. Come and shake hands with me, my dear. Why, what a fortunate little girl you are, to have had two mammas' instead of one!"

And then she croaked, and patted my head.

A tall, spare lady, dressed in black, was the next arrival; and after a few words of general conversation, she turned her hard, grey eyes upon me, and said,—

"I suppose that is the little stranger I have heard about." (Again I had to stand up and submit to be kissed, and have my shoulders patted.) "It is a truly generous deed of you, Miss Archer, to adopt the orphan. I hope she will 'arise and

call you blessed.' Has she any sense of divine things?"

"She seems to have been brought up with strange, superstitious notions." Whereupon, Miss Archer repeated what had passed the night before.

"Ah, well! we must not despise the day of small things; it is well that she has been taught to think seriously at all."

Then, opening her black silk bag, she took out a little penny book, called "Happy Mary," which she gave me. I began to read it directly, but it was very stupid;—all about a good little girl, who died when she was four years old. Several other visitors came in, to all of whom I was introduced, and made to shake hands with them. I cannot express what I suffered. If Miss Archer had taken off my frock, and undressed me before them all, I do not think I should have felt so strangely pained and ashamed. At last, one lady compassionately said,—

"I think that little girl looks as if she would like to go and play in the garden this fine day,—would you not, my dear?"

I said, yes; and Miss Archer told me to go. I was very thankful to get away, but it was a long time before I overcame the recollection of that morning. I dreaded the sight of a visitor, and ran away and hid myself whenever I could.

Miss Archer really intended to be very kind to me, but she set herself so systematically "to make me love her," that out of contradiction, I suppose, I did not love her half so much as would have come quite naturally if she had let me more alone. She teased me with caresses when I wanted to go and play, and then, if ever I did shew more warmth or affection than ordinary, she was sure to boast of it the next day to her visitors; and if ever I told her anything in childish confidence, she would in my hearing, and before my face, make a history of it, and repeat it as if it had been a tale. Of course they were not real secrets, only childish matters, still it hurt me very much to hear them repeated to persons to whom I would not have told them on any account.

When I had been with Miss Archer about a fortnight, she received from London a parcel of books; some of them were large quartos. As she read them, I saw her from time to time lift her eyes and look at me. They were all essays on education, and treatises on the management and training of children.

She very soon afterwards began to talk about hearing me my lessons regularly. She wrote out upon a card what I was to do every hour in the day, for every day in the week and it was hung up over the chimney-piece, in what was to be the school-room. A whole set of school-

books were bought for me,—a slate and copy-books; also a back-board; a pair of stocks, to keep my feet in position, and a wooden chair, with a very narrow seat and high back.

One fine Monday morning, my lessons began in earnest.

## CHAPTER IV.

I MAY as well describe the sort of place Bradwood was. It was a pert, thriving market town, consisting of one street of irregularly built houses, and one or two short streets branching off,—the church standing, as I have said, on a rising ground.

At the top of the hill, higher than the church, were the ruins of an old castle, still surrounded by its moat. The castle mount was covered with a thick underwood of trees, which had followed the cutting down of those of larger growth. Quiet houses, sleeping in the midst of gardens, the growth of several generations,—clean cottages, and cheerful dwellings of a better class, but opening straight out of the street upon the chief sitting-room, with flagged floor, built before the boarded parlours and carpets had become every-day luxuries. A red brick market-place, elevated a few steps; the roof, supported upon arches, open between, was adorned by a pair of stocks, hoisted far out of reach,—the iron-work so rusty, and the wood so moss-grown, that evil-

doers were relieved from all apprehension of their being ever practically administered.

Deep green vegetation, and rich pasture, and corn land lay on all sides—there was no hill of any height in the neighbourhood ; but the ground rose in gentle undulations, making perpetual variety, and every turn in the road (which seldom ran twenty yards in a direct line) brought out a fresh scene—luxuriant hedge-rows and abundance of trees, though not of the largest growths, were the chief features of the country—handsome family seats were scattered about, and in the extreme distance there arose the dark hanging woods of Elvington, the refuge of innumerable flocks of rooks, which repaired thither every morning, and returned to their respective nests every night in the summer, gathering in a large field near Miss Archer's house before they finally retired to rest. These rooks were a constant source of interest and wonder to me.

Bradwood was much resorted to by the neighbouring farmers and country people, for it was entirely a rural district, and the shops sold all such things as were in special demand amongst them ; but those for the sale of seeds and agricultural implements, were the best supplied, and on the largest scale. There were two veterinary surgeons of some repute, and also a couple of large blacksmith's forges, every thing bespoke an en-

tirely agricultural neighbourhood. Bradwood was about forty miles from London; a stage-coach passed through it every day, and it was the only post town for half a dozen neighbouring villages and parishes. With all these advantages, the people had naturally grown somewhat conceited; but still it retained a stereotyped, still-life appearance; what it was at this time, it had been a hundred years before, without manufacturing or stirring interests of any kind, but supplying the wants of the country round with a good tempered complacency, that never dreamed of being in a hurry, or of the possibility that anything could be wanted beyond what had sufficed for twenty years past; or, if by any chance asked for some novelty, its trades' people would have considered that, "not keeping any such article," would have been a perfectly satisfactory reply. Such was Bradwood—such it may still remain. I have not been there for many years, to note its changes. I have been particular in describing it, because it had a great influence upon my life.

Miss Archer, as I have said, began to teach me my lessons, and certainly she took a great deal of pains with me, but I did not make much progress; fits of stupidity, or rather of total incapacity to learn anything, seemed to take possession of me; it was not naughtiness, although it might look like it. I have seen a good deal of



the same sort of thing in other children, and it requires the gift of discernment of spirits to discriminate and deal with it.

Miss Archer made great endeavours, and was very patient on the whole, and the fault was not altogether with her, only teaching is an art that requires to be regularly learned like any other. Amateurs cannot take it up successfully at a moment's warning, and children cannot learn from them either, however well disposed.

We travelled through Pinnock's Catechisms of Geography, and Grammar, and Astronomy (of which latter, I could obtain no glimmer of its significance). Magnall's Questions, which, however, I liked the best of the set ! and then there was writing and arithmetic ! two mysteries that cast a gloom over my school days. Miss Archer gave up teaching me to write, in despair, and hired a master, who succeeded as little—poor man, he was the first of several who equally failed, and I am ashamed to confess that, till after I was twenty, my hand-writing would have been a disgrace to any charity child of ten years old ! when my character began to take some consistency and shape, my writing took a natural turn for the better. But for arithmetic—I may laugh *now* at recollecting my sorrows of long division ; but at the time it was like being under a spell of witchcraft. I have a vivid recollection of the days I had to

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spend, shut up by myself, with diet of bread and water, until I should have mastered, and proved some refractory quotient; if I could have worked at it mechanically, I think I might have succeeded better; but I was puzzled and tormented to understand how the figures acted upon each other to produce the required result; I could not shape it in words to ask, so it lay like an incoherent dream upon me, which the dry bread and water did not help to dispel. Then came the multiplication table, the pence table, and, worst of all, spelling, which became a source of shame and pain to me for many a long day.

There were other things that succeeded better; Miss Archer selected Rollin's Ancient History for my reading book, and I never tired of that—I do not know what rank it takes among histories; but I have reason to speak very gratefully of it.

My first great admiration and hero was Alexander the Great, for whom I still retain a great affection. Miss Archer tried to make me read Plutarch's Lives; but perhaps the book which gave me more intense delight than any other I ever read, either then or since, was the second volume of Robertson's History of America; it took hold of me like a fascination; all my dreams and fancies for many years, till I became a great girl of fifteen or sixteen, were of Cortez and his intrepid band, fighting for their lives amongst the Mexicans and

the wild tribes of the country. I lived in dreams about them, building castles in the air, which I inhabited along with them, always sharing their adventures, and being, of course, highly admired and esteemed by the whole set of them. To no human being did I ever confide these thoughts, my attachment to Cortez was a profound secret, that I should have sunk into the earth with shame, if any one had discovered; and if I am to tell the truth, I do not think that in my after life, I have ever experienced the strong romantic emotion that I felt for this Spanish hero, from the time I was little more than ten years old till I was long past fifteen, nor did I ever give so many thoughts to any other man! I suppose the cruelties and atrocities they committed ought to have shocked me; but they did not, and yet by a whimsical inconsistency I could not endure to read about Pizarro; of course I had no idea what my hero looked like, beyond the vague fact, that he had been certified as grave and handsome. Some few years since, the despatches of Hernando Cortez to the Court of Spain, were published with a portrait prefixed. When this book came into my hands, I held it for several minutes, without daring to lift up the silver paper that covered the plate, really fearing to look upon the face of the hero who had once taken such a hold upon me! However, I was not disappointed; if ever Cortez look-

ed like that portrait of him, I must have had plenty of companions in my enthusiasm for him.

I had several other admirations for different heroes of antiquity, though of a less intensity. Hannibal took a great hold of my imagination, and I shed many tears over the suicide at the Court of Bithynia. Themistocles and Alcibiades were, I remember, both special favourites; I read the stories of my heroes over and over again, and never wearied of them, nor willingly left their history to proceed to that of others, by which it happened that I did not get over much ground.

Certainly it was very ignominious to be called from living with these grand people, and making fictitious scenes and conversations with them, to be put on bread and water, because I could not do a sum in long division ! but it always happened that, when I was flourishing away with some *éclat* in these imaginary emotions, I was sure to fall down into some terrible fault or disgrace in my actual life, and I think it is a fatality that attends the generality of "castle building ;" we assume a high place, realize all manner of pleasurable emotions ; but give no heed to attain the stern effort and endurance necessary, before we can be worthy in the most humble capacity to be a partaker in great deeds.

I know how much the habit of indulging in this dreamy vanity enervated my character and

destroyed the power of doing my ordinary duties.

However, this is a digression.

Miss Archer studied systems of education for my benefit, heard my lessons accordingly, and except that she complained of my cold-heartedness and want of sensibility, to her confidential friends, I was very comfortable. She took me a drive or a walk every day, and as she was in the habit of visiting poor people, by way of another resource, she took me with her, as she said, to inculcate habits of charity ; and she used to sew for them one entire afternoon every week, which was the only needle-work I took pleasure in.

Her friends used sometimes to invite me to drink tea, and Miss Archer let me have parties of my own ; but everything was done as if it were a lesson, and intended to teach me some feeling or other, which she always told me beforehand : above all, she was anxious, as she said, to develop my "individual character ;" and she watched everything I did or said, and drew deductions from it, which she wrote down in a book, and read them over to me on Saturday night just before bed-time. Sometimes the entries were laughable enough ; I remember one in particular :

One day a friend of hers (the one who had made me a present of "Happy Mary") invited me to tea to meet some young friends. She lived in

a small house near the market-place, and the door opened into her parlour, down two steps ; and behind the house there was a little garden where we were allowed to play, and there was a little arbour where we were to drink tea. She was reckoned very stingy, except in giving away good little books. There were four of us. It was a fine afternoon, and we had dirtied our white frocks, and heated ourselves with play, when we were called to tea—very hungry of course. Miss Mincing was smiling benignly at the tea table, over cups and saucers of the tiniest and most fairy-like china, a plate of very small cakes, some thin bread and butter, and, in the midst, to crown the feast, there was one single egg in a silver stand ! This egg she presented to me, as eldest of the party, desiring me to divide it equally amongst us.

In those days children were not treated with the respect which it is the custom to use now, so that the indignity did not strike us, but the short allowance did. I divided the egg, and then asked for more ! This trait of greediness was reprimanded on the spot, and reported to Miss Archer, who duly entered it into my "conduct book ;" but the only remark she made was, that Miss Mincing would have done better to provide at least two eggs !

Time passed on, and by the time I had been with Miss Archer two years, the novelty of being

an adopted child had pretty well worn out. I had become a tall girl of eleven, instead of the pretty pet I had been at first. I was growing fast, and my prettiness had departed for the present. I had become thin and awkward, as growing girls are wont to be.

My temper, too, which Miss Archer could not manage, became very fretful and disagreeable, so that she more than once declared that she dreaded my going near her. I did not learn my lessons well, but was idle and inattentive, making no sort of improvement.

Looking back now, I cannot help thinking that my health must have had a great share in this unsatisfactory state of things, for I was miserable at being so naughty, but it seemed as if the more I tried to do better, the worse I succeeded.

As a last resource, Miss Archer requested Miss Prudamore to talk to me, to bring me to a sense of my conduct. That lady was Miss Archer's bosom friend, and I disliked her because, although she always spoke politely, she never was really kind, or seemed to like me.

With all my faults, I think I must have been tolerably obedient, for it never occurred to me to raise any objection, and I accordingly went and presented myself in Miss Prudamore's parlour. Miss Prudamore was a reduced gentlewoman, and since the accident that had deprived her of her

fortune, she had gone about the world exhorting everybody to be prepared for reverses, and to accustom themselves to privations, so as not to feel them so much when they came in earnest. She was hard and dry, but had an elaborately amiable manner, which never bore the least morsel of practical good nature, though she did many good deeds from a sense of duty.

She looked at me as I entered, and asked if I had brought any message? I replied, simply enough, that Miss Archer had sent me to be scolded! Upon which, without further preface, Miss Prudamore began to *impress* upon me the great generosity of Miss Archer in taking me from my low connexions, and educating me as a lady, instead of leaving me to be a nurse to my aunt's children.

"You know," she continued, "that your path in life will in all probability be a very thorny one. I see no prospect before you but gaining your living by your own industry. You have no right to depend on Miss Archer, for she will probably marry and have a family of her own to provide for, and it depends upon yourself whether you will go out into the world as a servant, or whether you will keep the station of a gentlewoman, to which you have been raised. Things cannot go on as they are; your benefactress is losing her health and strength in the thankless task of in-



structing you. If affection for her does not move you to change your conduct, some severe measures must be adopted, I am talking to you for your good—as your mother would speak if she could come back.”

“No indeed, you are not,” said I; “my mamma always talked sense that made me feel better; you are not at all like what mamma used to be.”

I was crying, and until I had spoken, was not aware of the extreme impertinence of my speech. Miss Prudamore drew herself up, and said, in a severe tone,—

“I can have no more to say to a little girl who so strangely forgets herself. Go home; I will see Miss Archer to-morrow.”

Miss Archer was of course seriously displeased. I had to make an apology, but that did not restore me to favour. Miss Prudamore made a parade of forgiving me; but she represented to Miss Archer that she was spoiling me, and that it was her duty to send me to a severe school, where I should be strictly kept in check; the result was, that Miss Archer consented, and requested Miss Prudamore to recommend one.

## CHAPTER V.

I WAS one day summoned into the drawing-room. I ran in from the garden, suspecting no evil. Miss Archer was sitting on the sofa, looking very grave, and beside her was Miss Prudamore, in all the glory of a yellow satin hat and feathers, and pea-green boots, trying to look unconcerned, as if she were only there by accident.

"Clarissa," said Miss Archer as I entered, "I have sent for you to tell you that I have been of late much dissatisfied with your conduct, and I have been persuaded to send you away from me to a strict school, where you will be under severe discipline, and will not be able to trifle with your mistress, as you have done with me. You think I am justified, do you not?" said she, turning to Miss Prudamore.

"Indeed I do; I think you have already done too much for one who has not the least claim upon you, and who, it is evident, has not the slightest gratitude, nor the least idea of all she owes to you. You are wasting your health and strength in attempting what could be done better

at a school of twenty pounds a year. Clarissa needs to learn her proper place, and at school she will soon find her level."

All this was said with a severe dignity towards me, and a certain tone of reproachful affection to Miss Archer, finished off by a little nervous shaking of the head, which gave it a sort of grieved emphasis.

I was extremely surprised, because, for the last day or two, I had gone on rather better, and I had no notion Miss Archer was so much dissatisfied. If she had been alone, I could have begged pardon, and shewn that I was not ungrateful; but the sight of Miss Prudamore, with her crooning, cat-like voice, and ill-natured eyes, stopped me from shewing that I had any feeling at all, and I did not reply.

"Well, Clarissa," said Miss Prudamore, "have you nothing to say to Miss Archer, to thank her for giving you the chance to earn your bread as a gentlewoman, instead of putting you under Nokes, to be trained as a servant?"

I could not have spoken a word, and besides, I did not know what to say.

"Well, Clarissa," said Miss Archer, "you may go to Nokes now, and you need not come down to dinner, for Miss Prudamore is spending the day with me, and would feel no pleasure in seeing an obstinate, sullen girl before her."

I lingered for a second, I was so pained by the change in Miss Archer's manner, that I wanted to break it down, and make her more natural with me; but I saw a slight motion in Miss Prudamore's shoulders, as though astonished at my audacity and Miss Archer's patience; and I left the room as desired, without attempting to say anything. I heard Miss Archer say,—

“Did you ever see such a child! I cannot express to you what I have had to suffer from her ungovernable temper!”

As for me, I went away, not knowing what to make of all I had just heard, and sat down in a corner of Nokes's room in silence and stupefaction. After a time, I began to cry bitterly, as if my tears would protest against the injustice with which I had been judged.

Nokes brought me my dinner, and was startled to find me in such trouble. Of late, I had left off telling her anything, because, whilst she had the knack of seeming very sympathizing, encouraging me to talk; she used to retail every word to the next person she saw, in a manner that made the most insignificant thing seem either mischievous or disagreeable. She had got me into several scrapes, and I was on my guard against her. She was, however, always very soothing in her manner, and in my present distress, I snatched at the comfort of it, and told her all that had

passed. I had reason to regret having done so, for though she tried to move Miss Archer by telling her how unhappy I was, she mixed it up with so much of her own spite and impertinence against Miss Prudamore (all which she laid upon me), that she only made Miss Archer more angry with me, as she did not fail to tell me the next morning.

I was kept up stairs all that day and the next. Miss Archer did not even come to see me at night, when I was in bed, as she was accustomed to do; and although I had very often wished she would not come and awaken me by flashing her candle in my face, in order that I might give her a kiss, and wish her a second good-night,—still, now that she stopped away, and I felt that it was in displeasure, I was very unhappy. I lay awake till I heard her come to bed, and then I got up and opened my door softly, hoping to catch her; but she entered her own room and shut her door as I opened mine. At length I was told to go down to breakfast as usual. Miss Archer was sitting at table, and looked so cold and displeased still, that all I had been thinking of to say died away in my heart.

After breakfast, I brought my lessons, which I had learned very carefully whilst I was up stairs, but she said, quite stiffly,—

“I shall not again attempt to hear your lessons.

My friends have represented to me that I have already strengthened your stubbornness and self-will, and made you of too much importance, by giving up my whole time to you. Your only return has been to harass me by your violent temper and disrespectful indifference. I shall always do my duty by you, but I cannot love you as I once did."

These were terrible words to a child.

"I do not mind being sent to school," I sobbed, "but I cannot bear to be sent away because you are angry. I am very sorry for all I have done, and I will try to behave better,—only do not say you will not love me again!"

"I dare say you are sorry now, but it is too late, and you have only yourself to thank for it. It is only just that you should be made to feel what you have lost."

Miss Archer then, without taking any further notice of me, proceeded to cut out some linen, which was to be made up into under-clothing for me. I sat crying silently, for I was very unhappy, and at length went to bury my sorrows in my bed-room.

Whether it was the reaction of a long run of unfortunate tempers and unsuccessful attempts to regain the right groove, or it might be that disgrace was good for me, but certain it is, that I had never been so little naughty as the few weeks

that preceded my being sent to school ; but Miss Archer still remained cold and distant, and I grew so unhappy, that I could neither eat nor sleep ; and it was not until she saw me really ill, that Miss Archer relented. She had professed to forgive me before, but a bitter leaven of recollection worked within it. At length, however, she made friends with me, and comforted me by saying that under any circumstances she should have sent me to school to acquire regular habits, and to avoid the interruption that a long journey would have made to my lessons. As soon as I knew that I was not to be sent there in disgrace, I rather enjoyed the notion of going to school, though I felt sure that Miss Prudamore would choose the most cross and disagreeable she could find anywhere. At last she came and said she had heard of one, kept by two most admirable women, and she shook her head and lifted up her hands, and looked uglier than ever ; at least I thought so.

East Manor House, which was the name of the school, was situated near a village about ten miles from London, and it was arranged that Miss Archer should leave me at school on her way thither, and that Miss Prudamore should accompany us, to introduce us to the ladies.

Miss Archer had relented about having me brought up as a governess, but Miss Prudamore

insisted so strongly that I should be brought up without any expectations except of "thorny paths," that Miss Archer was fairly talked down, and I was left with Mrs. Parry and her sister, with the understanding that I was to be considered regularly apprenticed to the craft of governesship.

Miss Archer took an affectionate leave of me, left me an ample supply of pocket-money, and whispered that when I grew up I should not be a governess unless I liked it; but she seemed terribly afraid lest Miss Prudamore should overhear her.

It is astonishing how easy it is to work when under regular and impartial discipline. I soon fell into the ways of the house, and learned to obey at once, without remonstrance or delay, which is in itself a valuable lesson for a young girl. It was quite different to any rule I had hitherto known, but I did not dislike it. A certain time was fixed for everything, and no excuse for neglect was ever made or taken. I must say that nothing was ever better calculated to destroy all affectation or nonsense. In certain instances there might seem occasional harshness, but, on the whole, the one impression made on every girl's mind was, that nothing short of actually and thoroughly doing her work would be accepted, and that is a good foundation for forming a character. I have never met with any one



who had so little tolerance for pretence as Miss Elizabeth Parry—she detected it and exposed it most relentlessly. Certainly, if I have reason to be thankful for one thing more than another in my life, it is for being sent to this school. I thought Miss Prudamore my evil genius, for persuading Miss Archer to send me away, but it turned out to be the greatest benefit she could have conferred. We never know what is good for us, and, on the whole, I have always found it the best way to take patiently whatever is sent to us, for nothing will ever be able to work us ill unless we put the poison in it for ourselves by our own evil feelings.

Miss Archer often wrote to me, and expressed great pleasure at the good accounts she received of me, for somehow it was quite natural to be good here. When the half-year drew to a close, Mrs. Parry received a letter to say that I was to spend my holidays there, as she was not returning home.

I remember those holidays well. I was happier than I had been at any time since my great sorrow, and those holidays mark the last time when I was a child.

Mrs. Parry, who seldom came into the school-room, but attended to household matters, used to take me with her over the house, when she made her rounds, and taught me how things should be

kept, and made me use my eyes, to see what needed arranging.

Miss Elizabeth, of whom I had always stood in great awe, turned out to be a most pleasant and amusing companion, when she chose to talk. I liked her extremely, and I have not met with any one like her since. She took me long walks into the country, and shewed me how to sketch from Nature; and though it is an art in which I never made much progress, still it has given me a pleasure in being out of doors, that I had not before. She gave me a copy of "Milton's Poems," and I read "Paradise Lost" to her: of course, it was more for the story than the poetry; but my admiration for Satan, as he figures there, was very great—I adopted him along with my other heroes! At last school began again, and I had to fall back into the ranks along with the rest.

As I was intended for a governess, Miss Elizabeth was much stricter with me than with any of the others. I had a great deal more to do, and was obliged to do it with more exactness.

## CHAPTER VI.

ONE morning—it was towards the middle of the half-year—I received a letter from my father; the first he had ever written to me. There was not much in it, except to tell me that he had met Miss Archer, and had heard her account of me with deep interest; and how grateful he felt for her generous kindness to me, “whom he loved more than anything ought to be loved in this uncertain world.” He said what a charming woman Miss Archer was, and how much she reminded him of my own dear mother. He did not tell me one word of how he had become acquainted with Miss Archer, nor what he had been doing since he went to Ireland, so long ago.

Miss Archer wrote to me a few days afterwards, and gave me a long history of how she had met my father by chance, whilst she was travelling in the West of Ireland. She seemed to admire him very much, and to have seen a great deal of him.

It might be about three weeks after this, that I was called out of school to see a lady who had

come to see me. This is always a welcome event to a girl at school, as it makes one of importance amongst the rest for the time being. I hoped it was Miss Archer ; but upon opening the door of the drawing-room, I heard the voice of Miss Prudamore, in its most sympathising cadence ; she was telling something so earnestly, that she did not hear me enter, and I heard her say,—

“I should never have advised it, and from all I have heard of his conduct to his first wife, I fear she will regret what she has done.”

I do not know how it was, but in the tone of that woman’s voice there was something that always had a most disagreeable effect upon me ; it always caused me to say just the wrong thing ; or else it was, that she liked to contradict and find fault ; for she always contrived to make exception to the most trifling things ; and then she had such a pretence of being amiable and sympathising, even when she was the most insolent.

“Well, Clarissa,” said she, turning and holding out her hand as I entered ; “I dare say you are surprised to see me here, are you not ?”

“No ”—replied I.

“Why, my dear, I do not see how you could have expected me—I myself did not know of coming until last night ? Have you heard from your father lately, or from Miss Archer ?”

"Not very lately."

"Did they tell you anything?"

"Yes, Miss Archer said she liked papa very much; and papa said, that Miss Archer was very charming and clever."

Miss Prudamore smiled in a way she intended to be fascinating, and said,—

"Well then, you will not be so much surprised to hear my news: they are married, and Miss Archer is now your step-mother; after all her generosity to you when you were a poor neglected child, I am sure you will receive her with all the duty and affection you would feel for a real mother. She might have aspired to a much higher match, and I think it is her affection for you has induced her to take a step, which, I hope she will have no cause to regret."

I was too much astonished to speak, and I did not like the idea of any one being put in mamma's place. I suppose I must have looked something of this feeling, for although I did not speak, Miss Prudamore could not resist being sympathising. "Ah!" said she, shaking her head, "I dare say it will seem somewhat hard at first; but your father had a perfect right to please himself, and when you reflect upon all that Miss Archer has done for you, I feel sure you will not allow any prejudice against step-mothers to influence your conduct. She begged me to come here and break

the news to you, and to assure you of her affection ; no doubt she will write herself very soon."

If Miss Prudamore would have left me to my own feelings, I dare say I should have felt and done all that was natural ; but she insisted upon prescribing everything I should think and feel on this occasion.

"I think you should not delay to write both to your father and to your mother-in-law. I make no doubt, that Mrs. Parry will allow you to write, even though it be not the week for writing letters.

"You see I was right, when I advised that you should be brought up, to make yourself independent. If a young family rises up, it is you who will have to act the part of elder sister ; it is you who will have to front the world, and to leave home to the younger and weaker ; it will save you many a heart-burning if you make up your mind cheerfully, and at once renounce all idea of settling down in a home where you are, and must ever be, an alien, and which can only be in any degree yours by adoption.

"At your age, there is no hardship in going out into the world and earning your own living ; but after a few years spent in the comforts of home, you would find it more difficult ; and in this world of vicissitude, you may have to work for

others as well as for yourself ; and that would be a proud day for you, would it not ?”

Whilst Miss Prudamore was holding forth, I began to feel that I was rapidly hating everybody in the world, and feeling myself bitterly ill-used ; luckily I had never been encouraged to be pert, or I am sure, I should have said something dreadful—I held down my head and said nothing.

“I consider,” said Miss Prudamore, turning from me to Mrs. Parry, with a manner intended to be ineffably flattering. “I consider that to be called to teach the young, and to educate them, is only second in importance to the work of the ministry ; it involves equal responsibility, and requires equal self-devotion. I do not understand those who would look upon it as an occupation entailing loss of wordly caste ; do you not agree with me, my dear madam ?”

“I think,” said Mrs. Parry, “that whatever duty we have, the more simply we do it the better.”

“Oh, certainly, certainly !” replied Miss Prudamore, somewhat disconcerted ; “I only meant to say, that I think we are permitted to feel proud of an honourable position in our Master’s service.”

Mrs. Parry bowed without remark ; and Miss Prudamore perhaps feeling that she had not

left a successful impression of herself, requested that the chaise might come round.

"Well, my dear," said she, as she gathered her shawl round her, "you will think of what I have said, and if ever you need any advice, I am sure I shall be most happy to give it you, out of regard for your step-mother, who is the friend I love most in the world."

The chaise was at the door, and Miss Prudamore was driven away. As soon as she was fairly gone, I burst into tears of annoyance and vexation.

"I hate that woman!" said I, stamping on the floor. "Why could not Miss Archer write herself to tell me; but she does not care for me, nobody does;" and I began to cry more violently. I was in a great passion, and felt that I was too little to be able to hate all the world, much as I desired it. When I had exhausted myself, I heard Mrs. Parry say in a calm, clear voice,—

"Clarissa, what is all this about? what is the matter?"

"I hate Miss Prudamore, and everybody," said I, sobbing.

"Miss Prudamore can do you no harm, unless you permit her; I grant you that she is about the most unpleasant person I ever saw, but that is *her* misfortune, not yours. You are indulging in a frame of mind that will not only make



you miserable, but make you worthless ; it will make you too weak to do any duty appointed to you.

“Listen to me, my child. It is before all things needful, that we should lead our life nobly,—and to that end, we must keep our eye fixed upon that which it is appointed us to do,—and not waste our strength by thinking what others say to, or of, us. Hear what a wise and holy man once wrote about vexations arising from disagreeable speeches and ill-natured persons.” She took a little book from her pocket, and read as follows :—

“‘Take it not to heart if some people think ill of thee, and say of thee what thou art not willing to hear. Thou oughtest to think worse of thyself, and to believe that no one is weaker than thyself. Let not thy peace be in the tongues of many, for whether they put a good or a bad construction upon what thou doest, thou art still what thou art. All disquiet of heart, and distraction of the senses, arises from inordinate love and vain fear. It is a small matter that thou shouldst sometimes bear with words ; and why do such small things go to thy heart ? but because thou art afraid of being despised ; thou art not willing to be reprehended for thy faults, and seekest to shelter thyself in excuses. He who has not his heart

within, nor God before his eyes, is easily moved.'

"My dear child, learn betimes to live as in the presence of Him, who is invisible; and take all your lot in life, as of His appointment, and you will be able to bear patiently with the officious speeches of twenty Miss Prudamore's."

I do not think that at the time I fully understood all that Mrs. Parry said, but whilst she spoke I felt quieter; and although I had only a confused notion of what it was to "submit to the Will of the Highest," yet I felt lifted out of myself and my hatred, and thought I should like to try to do my duty to please God; it gave quite a new meaning to all that Miss Prudamore had said I should have to do. I asked Mrs. Parry to read me some more out of her little book, but she said no, not just then, for that I must go and write my letters to papa and to my new mother-in-law. I did so, and very glad I was afterwards, for that very evening, just as we were sitting down to tea, there came a large parcel. There was an iced plum-cake, and some white gloves, and a pretty gold chain, and, best of all, the kindest and most affectionate letter from Miss Archer, now my step-mother, telling me that I was now her own child, and would always belong to her; and saying such nice, kind, comfortable things, that

I felt to love her very much indeed, and that I would do anything in the world to please her. There was a little note from my father, very kind too. Some of the gloves were for Mrs. Parry and Miss Elizabeth; and when I went to wish Mrs. Parry good-night, she gave a little droll smile, and shook her finger and said,—

“Recollect, little girl, you are to learn to be patient!”

## CHAPTER VII.

THIS was destined to be an eventful half-year to me. The next letter that I received from my step-mother, gave me the information of the death of my grandfather. She had been informed of it through a solicitor at Dunnington, who at the same time told her, that my grandfather had by his will bequeathed me fifty pounds, by way of remembrance, considering that I was otherwise provided for, and the remainder of his property went to the children of Mrs. Simon Morley, burdened with an annuity to Mary Rivers. Neither my uncle nor my aunt wrote to me, nor ever took the smallest notice; it seemed as though when I was sent away with Miss Archer, I was to all intents and purposes dead to them. I felt hurt that Mary Rivers should forget me, but I did not recollect, that as she could neither read nor write, it was not easy to keep up a correspondence.

I did not in reality care the least in the world about the death of my grandfather, only I thought it was proper to look very grave and concerned.

Mrs. Parry told me, rather sharply, not to be affected, and make a pretence of feeling what I did not. But though I was not sorry, I could not help speculating a great deal upon what had become of him. It was a strange, vague feeling of awe, at thinking of him as having entered the invisible world.

My step-mother also told me in her letter, that she and my father were staying in the Isle of Man, and that she did not know when they would return to Bradwood.

We were now in the beginning of November, and were drawing within sight of the holidays, but still no word had come to me of what I was to do, when one morning, just as we were going into school after breakfast, I was told that some one wanted me, and I found Nokes standing in the hall.

"Why, Nokes, where do you come from?" said I, embracing her; for I was delighted to see anybody belonging to me. "Is any one come with you?"

"No, miss," said she; "I left master and Mrs. Donnelly behind, in the Island, and I am sent over to take you to your aunt, master's sister, who lives near Dublin. But here are letters which will tell you all about it. But how you are grown, to be sure!" continued she, smoothing down my hair, and pulling up my frock, just

as she had done in old times. The hall was an awkward place for holding conversation, and yet I did not dare to invite her into one of the parlours. Mrs. Parry was crossing the hall; I ran up to her, forgetting all the deliberate respect with which we were obliged to address her, and out of breath with the excitement of the great news, I said,—

“Here is Nokes come to take me to Ireland! and she says we are to go away directly!”

“Is that the way,” said Mrs. Parry, severely, “that a young lady ought to address any one? Your mouth open, and your words panted forth as if you had been running up hill! I shall never succeed in making a lady of you in your manners. Bring Mrs. Nokes to speak to me in my sitting-room.”

Very much crest-fallen at this rebuff, I returned to Nokes, and took her to the little parlour where Mrs. Parry transacted her business, and settled her accounts. I was not allowed to stay, though I wished to do so, but was sent away to read my letter. It was partly written by my father, and partly by my step-mother. It mentioned briefly that affairs would oblige them to go abroad for some time, and that, during their absence, I was to reside with my aunt, Miss Donnelly, at Dublin. Nothing was said about the probable time of their return. My father

enjoined me to be very submissive and obedient to my aunt, and to take her as a model in all things. Whilst I was walking by myself, Mrs. Parry joined me. She spoke to me very kindly, and said that there was nothing to be done, but to obey my father's directions, and that I must pack up at once. She looked very grave, and seemed sorry. Miss Elizabeth came whilst we were talking, and was greatly surprised to hear all that had happened.

"The child will lose all she has gained here," said she, in a disturbed tone; "it will be the ruin of her." And then, turning to me, she asked if I knew anything of this aunt.

"No; only that she was very unkind to my own mamma, and made her very miserable."

Mrs. and Miss Parry looked at each other; at last Mrs. Parry said,—

"Well, my dear, we are not allowed to choose our own lot in this life; we have only to try to do our duty in that which is appointed to us. We must not expect to sit down comfortably long together. We must take the changes that are sent to us cheerfully and patiently. Half our misery arises from trying to hold fast the things that are being taken away from us."

"I am sure mamma would not have liked me to go to Miss Donnelly," said I.

"I repeat to you, my dear, that we are not to

choose for ourselves what we would like or dislike. To be able to renounce our own will is the most important lesson we can any of us learn; and if you, my child, are taught to do so, it will be far more valuable than anything we could teach you. You are now going out into the world; we shall be no longer with you, to tell you when you do wrong. You must watch over your own conduct, and be a judge to yourself. Recollect, that the absence of a mother, or a governess, cannot discharge you from the obligation to do right. Never forget, Clarissa, that if you do wrong, it is done; and laying the blame upon others will not undo it. It is doing wrong that you must fear, and not the blame that may follow."

"But how am I to know what is right?" asked I.

"You, no doubt, will make many mistakes, and fall into grievous faults; but so long as you honestly desire to live uprightly, and to do your duty in thought and intention, as well as in outward action, praying to God to give you grace to keep your heart single, you will not go very far wrong, but gain more and more light to perceive what is the right thing to do on every occasion as it arises."

Mrs. Parry left us, to give orders about packing my clothes, and to provide refreshment before we left. When we were alone, Miss Elizabeth said,—



"I am very sorry you are leaving us in this manner, Clarissa; but whatever happens, remember you have a home and friends here. Come to us in any emergency. Of course we do not know how things may turn out. You may find your aunt living in grandeur, but in all probability, you will have your own way to make in the world, as thousands of others have had to do before you; and so long as my mother and I live, you may count upon us as your friends."

I looked up at Miss Elizabeth; I could not say anything to her, but I hope she did not think it was because I did not feel grateful.

I knew she was not given to making speeches, and always did more than she said.

When we reached the end of the walk (for we were in the garden all this time), she stopped, and turned to me, saying,—

"Well, it is quite time I was back in the school-room. You can write us a line to say how you get to your journey's end. There, good-bye, good-bye!—there is nothing to cry about."

So saying, she shook hands with me quickly, and entered the house.

Everything was soon ready for my departure. I left my farewell messages for the young ladies with Mrs. Parry, as Miss Elizabeth would never have heard of school being disturbed: then the

post-chaise in which we were to go to London, being come to the door, Nokes and I departed.

As soon as we were alone, she began to give me an account of all that had taken place since I had been away, and of a great deal that it would have been quite as well she had not known herself.

She told me that the real reason of my being sent to Dublin was, that since the death of her mother, Miss Donnelly had been left in very pinched circumstances, and that my father had said she might as well be paid for bringing me up as strangers, as she would teach me to behave as became a Donnelly.

“And my mistress, ma’am, never refuses anything to Mr. Donnelly; so she agreed as soon as he proposed it.

“You see, ma’am, Mr. Donnelly was in difficulties when he married, and he and my mistress have been living in the Isle of Man for him to be safe, and they will go and live in Boulogne, because, as I have heard, everything is cheap and genteel there. Mr. Donnelly, your papa, miss, is a very nice, affable gentleman, not one bit of pride about him. He is very fond of my mistress, and behaves as politely as if he were a lord, only he does not like stopping at home—he has been used to company, and is more fond of playing cards and billiards than she quite likes. At

first, when he complained of being dull, my mistress invited Miss Prudamore to come on a visit, but master could not do with her at all—she interfered and gave her opinion when it was not wanted, and there was a grand quarrel; after which, master begged he might never see or hear tell of her again, and mistress (as was only right and likely) held with her husband; but Miss Prudamore reproached her, and wrote no end of letters, for some of which my mistress had to pay double postage, and the upshot of the whole matter was, that my mistress and Miss Prudamore, from being like David and Jonathan, as I may say, are now become bitter enemies. I am not sorry that master has sent Miss Prudamore about her business, for she was not pleasant to come about a house. She was the cause that my mistress and I did not speak to each other for three days, and we were near parting on account of some observations she made.”

By the time Nokes had come to the end of her reflections about Miss Prudamore, we had reached London.

We were to spend the night at the house of a cousin of Nokes', who was a baker, in Poland-street, and who, from some words she dropped, was, I fancy, the faithless lover who had once given her reason to believe that she would be the wife chosen to preside over his house and counter.

Mr. Byles, for that was his name, did not, however, seem to feel either remorse or embarrassment—he presented us to Mrs. Byles, a buxom, comely woman, and they both shewed us the greatest hospitality.

The next morning he saw us on board the packet for Dublin—not a steam-packet, such as is used now, but a sailing-packet, which no one ever knew for a certainty when it would arrive at its journey's end. We had contrary winds; and both Nokes and I suffered dreadfully from seasickness.

When we reached Kingston, the noise and confusion, and scrambling of cars, and porters, and beggars were terrible. As Nokes and I were standing helplessly on deck, watching the throng, and wondering what would become of us, a dirty car-man approached us, and inquired whether we were the ladies expected by Madam Donnelly? On our reply in the affirmative, he handed us a scrap of crumpled paper, on which was written, in a stiff, cramp hand, that we were to accompany the bearer, who would bring us to the address written below.

He did not look a very inviting guide, but he lifted up my luggage with the greatest ease, and driving away the crowd on each side, he led us as his lawful prey, to where a jingling, outside car stood drawn up at a little distance. We were

both so stunned with the clamour of the beggars, and the sight of misery on all sides, that we neither of us well knew what we were doing. But when we saw the car, which was of a fashion we had never seen before, we drew back, and declared we would rather walk; and when the car-man remonstrated, Nokes whispered to me that she was sure he only wanted to drive us to some lonely place, to rob and murder us. So we were resolute to walk—the car driving at a footpace beside us. At last we reached a tall, lonely house, a little off the road. It was built of brick, and had once been whitewashed, but the traces of this had nearly disappeared. It stood in a piece of ground something between a meadow and a garden; wooden palings, in many places broken down, separated it from the road, and a path of rough, coarse gravel led up to the house.

It was a double house, three stories high, but some of the windows were broken. The lower row had black, wooden, outside shutters, held back by iron buttons—which made them look as if they were crucified—except one, which had broken from its fastening, and flapped against the window panes like the wing of a raven.

“Well, I never saw such a ghost-haunted looking place in all my days,” said Nokes; “are you  
” good man, that you are bringing us

“If you are the ladies wanting Miss Donnelly, sure it is the Miss Donnelly who lives here who is wanting you. She comes of a real, old Irish family. Did I not used to drive her uncle, Sir Cornelius, in the days of his grandeur? and did not my father drive his father up to the day he was buried? and did not old Miss Donnelly call me up this blessed morning and bid me meet the packet, which ought to have been in yesterday, and find out her niece, who was to come over in it? and did I not know the young lady at once, the minute my eyes saw her, by her pretty Donnelly face? God bless it!—and how should I not be able to find my way back to the right place, when I came from it only this morning?”

He gave his horse a cut with the whip and jerk with the reins, to make it enter the gate, which being fast in the ground about half way open, required skilful steering to enter without damage. When we reached the front door, the steps of which looked as if they had never been washed in this world, nor the wood work ever painted, a peal from a single door-bell was at last answered by a dirty, but good-natured looking woman, without any cap; her black hair standing in all directions—a shawl, that had once been green, pinned over her shoulders—her feet thrust hastily into shoes she had not pulled up at the heel—and her dress, of dirty blue print, hanging in festoons over

a red stuff petticoat, from being torn and the rents pinned together. She had, however, bright eyes and very white teeth, which she displayed to their full extent by a joyful smile, when she saw us, exclaiming, with a strong accent, and the softest voice I ever heard,—

“Sure it is glad to see you I am, miss. Sure the mistress has been looking out for you this hour or more, and no wonder she should weary when she was looking for such a sweet, pretty creature as yourself.”

“Your servant, ma’am,” said she, with a courtsey to Nokes; “you are welcome to Ireland. There,” continued she, throwing open a door on one side of the passage, “you will find the mistress there, and I will help Andy in with your boxes.”

I saw a tall, thin, elderly woman sitting at the other end of the room, in the depths of an old-fashioned easy chair. She did not rise to receive us, but made a stately movement.

“It is your aunt, miss, you had better go up to her, may be she is lame,” whispered Nokes; but I rather hung back, fancying there was some mistake.

“Come forwards, niece, and let me see you,” was uttered in a hard, imperious voice.

I obeyed with some embarrassment. When I reached within three steps of her arm-chair, and extending her arms, laid two large.

bony hands upon my shoulders, which made me think of the wolf in "Red Riding Hood." She looked keenly into my face, and seemed to peruse it feature by feature ; and when I held down my head under her scrutiny, she took hold of my chin with one hand, holding me back with the other.

"Yes," said she, after a moment, "you are a Donnelly. I see little of the Morley in your appearance. You have the Donnelly brow and hair, and a flash of the Donnelly eyes too. I acknowledge you ; and I trust you will be a pledge of happier days than your mother brought to us. You are welcome."

She bent her head and kissed my cheek in a solemn and stately way, that left me astonished. She resumed her seat, and looking towards the door where Nokes was still standing, she said with a lofty air,—

"That is your attendant, I presume?"

I explained to her who Nokes was ; and then with an air of affable politeness, but as though she were speaking to one of entirely different species to herself, she said,—

"I trust you left my brother and his lady in good health."

"They were quite well when I left them to fetch Miss Clarissa," replied Nokes, somewhat puzzled by this mode of address.



"You have lived long with your present mistress!"

"I lived independent, and gave up a good business to come and live with Miss Archer, at her particular request. I only came to oblige her," replied Nokes, with a slight toss of her head.

Extremely surprised that she had not been asked to sit down, she leaned upon the back of a chair. My aunt replied to this by a cold, displeased bend; she seemed to find Nokes strangely familiar.

"In our family we look upon a faithful servant as a humble friend, and I have no doubt that my sister-in-law so considers you; but doubtless you need rest and refreshment. I have already given orders for your accommodation."

With a wave of her hand my aunt signified to Nokes that her audience was at an end, and that she was to consider herself dismissed; and poor Nokes, with an attempt to seem as if she were withdrawing of her own accord, left the room. I believe, from what I afterwards saw of my aunt, that this scene was got up expressly to impress me with a sense of the dignity of the Donnelly family into which I was entering. My aunt was a tall, thin, angular woman, with large features, that could never have been handsome under any circumstances. She appeared to be somewhere about fifty years of age, and I dare say she was

quite as good-looking, if not more so, than she had been in her younger days. She was dressed in a low-bodied, pea-green tabinet, with a handkerchief of Limerick lace. Her hair, which was red, was arranged in large, rolled curls to the top of her head, and surmounted by a species of yellow gauze turban. A narrow strip of black velvet passed across the top of her forehead, and was fastened over the left temple by a lozenge-shaped brooch, containing an eye painted in sepia, and set with small pearls, somewhat black and discoloured. Her hands were partially covered with mittens, allowing the old-fashioned rings which adorned her fingers, to be seen—the rings were of great pretensions, but they looked rather dim. A book lay upon a faded velvet cushion on the table near her, otherwise there was not a trace of any employment to be seen in the whole apartment.

A silence of some moments ensued after Nokes had departed. My Aunt did not bid me sit down, nor ask me to take off my bonnet; I stood, not knowing what to do, or what to say; at last, in a dignified tone, she said,—

“Ring the bell, niece.”—

I obeyed, of course; and after the lapse of a few minutes, which were employed by my aunt in looking at me without speaking, the same servant whom I had before seen, answered the summons.

“Norah,” said my aunt, extending her hand towards me—“this is my niece, Miss Clarissa Donnelly, confided to my care by her father. It is my wish that she should be treated with the respect due to a daughter of her house.”

“Of course, Miss Donnelly, ma’am,” replied Norah, in a rich brogue, and the sweet voice, which had already struck me—“a proud and joyful day it is for me to see her pretty face. I’m thinking she will be the picture of what you were at her age; any one may see, with a look, that she comes of the good old stock.”

“It is enough,” said my aunt, majestically; “conduct my niece, Miss Clarissa, to the apartment that has been prepared for her; and recollect, that when you have occasion to speak of her to strangers, you will call her Miss Donnelly’s niece, Miss Clarissa, which is her proper style and title.”

“Of course, ma’am, I will call her whatever you like.”

“Niece Clarissa, you will return here when you have laid aside your travelling attire;—make your reverence and withdraw.” I made the best minuet courtsey I could execute at the moment, and followed Norah, very glad to escape.

“This way, darling!” said Norah, when the parlour-door was shut,—“don’t catch your foot in the carpet; it is all in holes,—bad ’cess to it!

but we will have it up to-morrow,—and don't go to lean against the railings, they are wicked and weak enough to break down with you, though you are as light as a feather. What has come over the old lady all at once, that she speaks so grand, as if she had just swallowed a dictionary. But this is to be your room any way."

We entered a large, low, rambling room, with beams across the ceiling; close and dirty, and stuffed with dusty handboxes and old trunks; pieces of old furniture, such as generally find their way to the lumber-room, were piled in the corners. A low, meagre four-post bedstead, with stretched and scanty hangings of faded blue moreen, with yellow binding, stood before the window—the thin, skeleton mattress was covered with an old blue silk quilt, the work of some former generation of Donnelly's. An oak bureau clamped with brass, and surmounted by a small swing-glass, stood opposite the bed; a washstand, that retained traces of having once been painted with flowers, containing a white washhand basin, and a blue jug with a fractured lip and broken handle, completed the furniture. The floor was bare, except a narrow strip of very threadbare carpet round the bed. The walls were adorned with a discoloured sampler, in a worm-eaten frame, and some undistinguishable crayon drawings of some old-fashioned little boys and girls, now nearly effaced by time and damp.

"Sure, the missis has been busy getting the room ready herself," said Norah ; "and here are drawers where you may keep your things elegantly, and from the window you may look on all that passes, and there is not another house within a mile of us."

This might be intended to console me for the absence of any blind or curtain ; for as the window was not large, and at some distance from the ground, it had been considered superfluous.

Norah uncorded my trunk, and I asked for Nokes, but "she was trying to catch a wink of sleep," Norah said, "in regard that she was fairly killed, 'not having shut an eye since she left London !" I wished it were permitted to me to do the same ! But I arranged my hair before the little looking-glass, which represented my face of a shape that I had never seen it before ; Norah fastened my dress, bestowing many commendations both on it and on me, and then hastened down stairs to my aunt.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MY aunt was sitting where I had left her, and I might have thought that she had not changed her position whilst I had been away, except that a folding stool, something like a camp-chair, was placed at a little distance from her, and a morsel of tatting was in her hand. She looked up as I entered, and as I did not make a courtsey, not having been accustomed to do so, my aunt said, in a stately manner,—

“At your age, niece Clarissa, well-born young ladies never forget their reverence on entering a room where their superiors are.”

I immediately, with some trepidation, endeavoured to correct my omission.

“Am I always to do that, aunt, on entering and leaving the room?”

“On entering and quitting my presence, certainly, until after your presentation at the castle, which will mark the term of your education, when you will take your place in society.” Then, pointing to the low, folding stool, she said, “You may sit down. That will be your seat, when you

are bid to sit down. I know that, in these days, there is a total forgetfulness amongst young people of the respect and restraint in which they ought to hold themselves before their elders; but I hope to teach you better things, and to breed you up like a young lady of quality in the good old times, when each rank and condition was kept in its proper limits. I sat down very gladly, for, in truth, the journey and the long walk had much fatigued me. I was momentarily in hopes that it would be dinner-time. My aunt continued her tatting, and I sat, with my hands before me, looking round the strange place where I found myself.

It was something between a lumber-room and a curiosity-shop. The apartment was large and comfortless; either the walls had never been entirely covered with paper, or it had been stripped off to a large extent; the ceiling was festooned with cobwebs, and covered with the fly-marks of apparently many summers. The window-curtains, covered with dust, were of dull, red moreen, trimmed with faded black cotton velvet. The carpet, which only covered the centre of the floor, had once been a very handsome piece of tapestry, worked in flowers, on a purple ground, with a border of rose-buds, but was now entirely thread-bare, and worn into various holes. The furniture was black with age, and dull with dirt and

neglect. It was of various fashions and ages. One or two heavy, high-backed chairs, with seats worked in faded tent-stitch; whilst three or four others were of painted black wood, ornamented with brass knobs and stars, and with little moreen cushions. A Grecian-shaped couch, covered with drab moreen, stood against the wall,—but that was never moved or used, because it had lost one of its hind legs, as I one day found out to my cost. A harpsichord, in satin-wood, very much warped and cracked, and hopelessly out of tune, and a large folding scrap-screen, shading the back of my aunt's chair from the draught of the window, pretty nearly completed the furniture.

A few family portraits, some with frames and some without, hung round the walls; some curious china, most of it, however, cracked and broken, and a few curiosities, which looked like the votive offerings at some deserted shrine, covered with religious dust, which had been allowed to settle upon them without molestation—these, as I afterwards found, were considered very precious relics indeed, and had all some Donnelly legend attached to them. I had ample time to take an inventory of all the room contained, for my aunt preserved an unbroken silence. I was dropping asleep when Norah came in to lay the cloth for dinner.



I was a mere girl, and had never been made of the smallest importance ; my aunt, less than any one, seemed inclined to make much of me ; still, on this, my first entrance into the presence of the Donnelly family, there was an attempt made to impress me. Norah laid a fine, damask tablecloth, perfectly clean, though it sadly needed darning, with a coat-of-arms woven as the pattern in the centre ; silver forks and spoons, by no means bright, but still undeniable silver, and marked with the family crest—"a wild cat rampant, with long whiskers proper"—as my aunt told me. The dinner was meagre enough, but it was served with a certain emphasis, and my aunt presided over it with a manner that gave dignity to the scrag of mutton and potatoes, and made them seem somehow distantly related to a Lord Mayor's feast. Everything was handed by Norah on a silver salver. I afterwards discovered, that the usual place of existence for this silver was at a certain silversmith's in Dublin, who lent money on pledges. I was very hungry, and though there was not much to eat, yet my aunt's manner of helping me almost made me believe that I had had a good dinner. The dessert consisted of three oranges and four biscuits, with a small decanter of wine, which my aunt called Bordeaux, and condescended to tell me a long anecdote of how her uncle, Sir Tiberius, had joined a former Lord-

Lieutenant in a pipe of it, which they imported, and how when it came to be bottled he had made my grandmother a present of three dozen.

"I do not approve, niece, of the custom of young women drinking wine, but, after your journey, a few drops may not be unadvisable."

A few drops were accordingly poured into the small, plain, funnel-shaped glass which had been placed before me, but I think Sir Tiberius and the Lord Lieutenant must have been imposed upon, for it was the most dreadfully nasty stuff I ever tasted. I could not help making a face at it. My aunt looked very displeased, but I told her I did not like wine, and so she set it down to my want of knowing better.

After dinner, my aunt somewhat relaxed in her manner. As it was the end of October, the weather was chilly, and though my aunt did not indulge in the luxury of a fire in the daytime, Norah kindled a handful of turf in the grate after she had cleared the table. My aunt bid me draw my stool to the hearth, and began to ask me many questions about Miss Archer, and my past mode of life. She drew herself stiffly up and frowned at several of my replies.

"Well, niece!" said she, at last, "no one seems to have been at the pains to tell you about your own family. Of course you know that it is only the descent by the father's side that counts

for anything, and by your father, a Donnelly in the direct line, you belong to one of the best and oldest families in Ireland. You see here," continued she, looking round the walls, "portraits of your near relations and ancestors, all of them honourable, and many of them employed by their king and country in the army and the navy, and one or two who have been judges on the bench. There has not been a merchant or a tradesman amongst us, and not one who would not have thought it scorn to have demeaned themselves by picking up dirty money by merchandise. They have lived on their own estates for generations, and though the estates have been lost, yet the spirit of the old race has never been bent or bowed; your father's was the first marriage in the family out of the rank of gentlefolks, and poor as I am, I rejoice that no fortune followed it, and that none can reproach him with having degraded himself for money!"

I fancy I must have looked indignant at this speech, for my aunt continued in a milder tone:—

"Of course, child, it is right and natural that you should hold to your own mother, but I cannot forget the cruel wrong done to our family. You are a Donnelly, and must learn to feel as one."

My aunt then proceeded to tell me many family histories, and some passages in her own life, by which I learned that she had been three times on the point of marriage with different noblemen, though something particular had always happened to prevent it.

"Poor as I am," said she, "and reduced as my present style of living is now, compared with what it has been in former times,—fortune has not been unmindful of me,—three coronets have hovered over my brow, and many golden balls have rolled to my feet, which I have spurned from me, because they were unaccompanied by the noble blood with which alone I could have consented to ally myself. I can endure poverty, thank God, and my resources enable me to be satisfied with my own company. I am never less alone, than when alone; but any insult or disgrace to our family would find me powerless; I should perish under it."

I think my aunt rather enjoyed having a listener to whom all her stories about the family were new, for she grew more and more rhetorical as she proceeded, and it seemed to do her good. We had no tea, but what my aunt called "a slight refection"—a glass of water, and a very small biscuit, which Norah brought in upon the silver salver, and which was the last occasion on which it appeared for many weeks after.

When I went to bed, Nokes came to undress me and to take leave of me, as she was to depart very early the following morning. She looked disdainfully round the room, which in truth appeared disconsolate enough by the light of a small piece of rush-light, though it was in a plated candlestick.

"Well, miss," said she at last, breaking silence, whilst she brushed my hair, "it goes to my heart to leave you in this wretched hole. I say nothing against the old lady, in regard that she is your aunt, and may-be has known better days. The Irish don't feel dirt as we do; but we English cannot get accustomed to it, and use is everything in this world. We should despise nobody—for pride was not made for man—'not more than others I deserve;' but I am sure to the day of my death I shall feel thankful that I was not born amongst savages. However, miss, keep up your heart, time will pass on, and misses will be sending for you home again. You may depend on my giving her no rest till she does."

"I beg, Nokes," said I, "that you will not go and say anything disrespectful of my aunt—she might have been a marchioness if she had chosen, and she is quite a lady, though she does live in this place."

"A fine lady indeed, who locks up the meat

from her servant, for fear the poor thing should help herself to a mouthful ! I never saw such ways ; but it is no concern of mine," replied Nokes, somewhat nettled ; " but if I were her, I would sell my fine candlestick, and buy a pound of decent candles !"

Nokes had, incautiously, attempted to snuff the rush-light, which immediately went out, leaving us in the dark. I would not allow her to leave me, to relight it, as I was nearly undressed ; and there was, as she said, " a glimmering of moonlight enough to see a ghost by." She embraced me affectionately after I was in bed.

" And now, miss," said she, " I have one parting request to make. You will be growing a fine young lady soon, and do not let any Irish person fall in love with you and beguile you to marry them. Above all, miss, don't let them make you a papist ; and on no account neglect to put oil into your hair every night, and to brush it well before you go to bed. A little oil every night is a sovereign remedy for keeping the hair soft and glossy. A London hair-dresser told me that as a secret ; and to be sure I have taken such a pride in your hair, that it would grieve me for it to grow into an Irish wilderness. Well, miss, good night, and God bless you !"

Nokes uttered these last words with a dreary sigh, and groped her way out of the room.

I was very tired and sleepy ; but I could not help feeling a certain complacency, at being warned against a lover for the first time, as an impending danger.

When I met my aunt the next morning at breakfast, poor Nokes had departed. My aunt began to play at giving me lessons and taking care of me. It was something for her to do, and she was very thankful for it. She had no love of reading ; but in her day, she had been flattered, and called "a superior woman ;" so she did not for one moment doubt her own capability of bringing me up as a young lady of quality. Her one great notion was, keeping up her own dignity ; making me hold up my head ; never speaking unless spoken to ; never sitting down until bidden ; nor leaving the room without permission ; and a profound reverence, both on exit and entrance. These were the chief points on which she insisted ; but to these, she added,—hearing me read a few pages of Rapin's History of England, of which she possessed some volumes, bound with the Donnelly arms ; learning to make tatting, to do tent-stitch, and to copy old pages out of an old treatise of heraldry, into her album. Why, as she possessed the work itself, it was necessary to make extracts from it, I do not know, but heraldry was the one thing she seemed to know thoroughly, and took great pains to teach

me ; making me draw, and colour the “coat armours,” as she called them that were quoted in the book ; also, I had to practise her old music on the harpsichord. One day was like another. On Sunday, if it were fine, Andy, the car-man, who had fetched us from the packet, came with his car, and after putting on an old livery coat and hat, drove us to church and brought us back ; and then left the borrowed clothes to be preserved in Miss Donnelly’s press, until Thursday morning, when he again drove us to prayers in the same state ; for all this, he received sixpence a week, and a glass of whiskey,—by way of generosity,—for he was supposed to come from a desire to shew his respect to the family.

I would very willingly have dusted the room we lived in, and kept it tidy ; but my aunt was so dreadfully angry one day, when she caught me in the act, that I never dared venture to attempt it again ; it was servant’s work, and I was not to touch it. It was only by stealth that I could mend my clothes ; “for plain sewing and mending were beneath a Donnelly.”

My aunt did not care how dirty or shabby a dress she wore when no one saw her ; but I believe she would sooner have died than condescended to wear a dyed, or cleaned gown. When she was in a good temper, her whole talk was about going to the Lord-Lieutenant’s balls,—the



court dresses she had formerly worn on those occasions,—the partners she had danced with,—and occasionally she favoured me with a description of the “magnificent, antique furniture” of the mansion she and her mother had inhabited in London, when they took my father and mother to live with them, and when my father had a place under government. When she was in a bad temper, which was much oftener the case, she used to talk of nothing but the disgrace my father had brought on the family by marrying, and of all the beautiful young heiresses he might have had, if he had not been “too honourable for this world.” This always put me into a great rage, and though I felt that I would have killed my aunt if I could, yet I did not dare to speak a word; only I always found out something that would vex her, and did it before the day was out;—I did not care for being punished for it.

My aunt was not the only inmate in the house, —there were two other lodgers, besides the mistress; and whenever I could, I got away from my aunt, and went to talk to them, or else to Norah, who was always good to me; and I used to help her do her work, in spite of my aunt, who said it was the “bad drop that was in me” shewing itself.

The mistress of the house lay in bed nearly all day long. She was a dirty, faded, half-lady

sort of person, with a pair of fierce black eyes, that frightened me,—they seemed to try to look hard at everybody, to hide the recollection of some sorrow or disgrace. Norah told me, one day, that she had been in deep trouble; that she had been married to an English officer, but he had taken advantage of having only been married by a Catholic priest, to abandon her. She was too poor to force him to do her justice; his relations tried to buy her off with money, which, for the sake of her infant, she had accepted. The baby died, and ever since she had been broken-hearted, for the shame and the sorrow that had come upon her. Her own people would not look upon her. She had taken, by degrees, to drinking; and when the fit came over her, she lay in bed for days together, drinking as fast as she came to her senses; and was seen by no one but poor Norah, who had lived with her ever since her marriage, and who made excuses for her, and kept her out of sight, till the fit of intoxication had passed away.

“Sure she has been driven to it, miss,” added Norah.

In the parlour, opposite to my aunt’s, there was a fine, flashy, middle-aged woman, of good birth, and whose connexions were more than respectable, but who, through some imprudence, or incompatibility of temper, had thrown herself out.

of the current, and now lived alone in lodgings, on small means. Still, she sometimes received visits from her more fortunate relations, who always came in their carriages, with fine coats of arms,—and, once or twice, a coronet and a bishop's mitre. My aunt used to think a great deal of her, and always, after one of these visits, paid Miss Butler great attention. She and my aunt professed to be great friends, though they often quarrelled, and vowed never to “notice each other again;” for when they were angry, my aunt used to speak of Miss Butler as “a person she was kind to out of respect to her family;” whilst Miss Butler, when we were alone, always spoke as though she considered herself very superior to my aunt.

In one of the bed-rooms, at the top of the house (for she could not afford a sitting-room), there lived an old lady, whom I soon got to like the best of any of them, and I spent every moment of time I could with her.

She had formerly been an actress, and she used to tell me stories about Mrs. Yates, Miss Farren, and Mrs. Jordan, and all the famous actresses of her day, and long histories of how they had all “married to coronets.” She told me too of her own triumphs, and how she might have been a lady of title, if she had not been foolish, and married a harlequin, in spite of all her friends could say; and how he ill-used her, and spent all the

money she earned. She used to read old plays to me, and declaim her best parts, and gave me lessons in acting, in which I delighted. At first my aunt made strong objections to my keeping company with a person of "such low connexions," and forbade me to go near her; but the old actress, who liked to have me with her, and who was besides, a really good-hearted woman, paid a visit to my aunt, and flattered her so dexterously, speaking of the liberty she had taken in giving her niece a few lessons in elocution, that she put my visits on quite a different footing; and my aunt who was glad to get rid of me sometimes, sent me every day for a couple of hours to Mrs. Nuttall's room, "to take my lessons in elocution and graceful deportment."

Amongst other things, she taught me "how to sit as would become a captive princess, receiving a visit from her jailer." This trait, particularly charmed my aunt, who desired me to repeat it; but we both forgot, that the poor old moreen sofa had a broken leg, and was only propped against the wall; it came down, and quite spoiled the effect of my *pose*. She also taught me "to walk with the step of a goddess treading upon the clouds," and gave me many other valuable instructions for equally probable emergencies.

She had some old, torn stage copies of Shakes-

peare's acting plays ; these I seized on with avidity, and read and declaimed them, till I knew almost every speech by heart.

It is no great wonder, that my dreams by night and by day, soon were of going upon the stage, and making an immense success.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE first fruits of my aunt's accession of income—for the prospect of the fifty pounds a-year that were to be paid her for my board, had made her feel quite a millionaire—was to determine upon giving a solemn tea-party.

She had in and around Dublin a circle of acquaintance, with whom she lived in the observance of the most courtly ceremonial of etiquette. They had, most of them, very narrow incomes, but they had all great claims to gentility. They, like my aunt, were surrounded by such stately illusions upon their own importance, that their poverty was enveloped by a halo that nearly deprived it of its sting. In fact, it is quite wonderful how imagination has the power to render the same circumstances either enviable or insupportable—one would almost say there is no such thing as reality, but that

"This vain world is all a dream,  
Where nothing is, but all things seem!"

I am sure I lived amongst the litter and discomfort of my aunt's lodgings, and imagined, by dint

of hearing so much of the antiquity and descent of the Donnellys, that I was equal to a princess of the blood, at least; and somehow, the very poverty in which we lived was transformed from being a hardship into a mark of being a gentlewoman.

This tea-party was intended to be a very grand affair indeed. The first six months of my pension had been paid in advance, so that my aunt was more in funds than she had been for a long time past.

She and Miss Butler wrote cards of invitation for tea and supper, which Andy, the car-man, in a clean pair of gloves and a new hat, carried round. There was not a single refusal—everybody would be most happy to come.

And now, for the first time in my life, I was initiated into the mystery of giving a party. Of course all the silver came home from the silversmith's, and I had to clean it. Half-a-dozen packs of cards were procured through Andy from one of the Dublin clubs. My aunt laid in a store of green tea, and coffee, and wax candles. Then followed innumerable consultations with Miss Butler, much cooking, and inconceivable contrivances for manufacturing exquisite little supper-dishes "out of nothing at all," and to make cakes that did not require either butter or sugar. Although my aunt despised household work, and

would have sat for days in the midst of dust and dirt, sooner than have degraded her hand by touching a duster; still, by some metaphysical process, it was highly stylish and distinguished to attend to the details of a tea-party, or, as my aunt phrased it, "an evening entertainment." My aunt's apartment was cleaned, and from the depths of some mysterious trunks she produced a set of antique, crimson satin curtains, somewhat faded and moth-eaten, but still relics of old grandeur, that looked remarkably well by candle-light; also she brought out from various receptacles, sundry embroidered cushions, fillagree card-boxes, and Chinese puzzles, and when the card-tables were set out, and the candles lighted, the room wore quite a different appearance.

Miss Butler lent her parlour for the supper-room, and, in consequence, had the privilege of inviting some of her own friends. Norah was dressed up in a new cap, trimmed with magnificent white satin bows, whilst Andy had his face and hands specially washed for the occasion, and wore his livery. His post was to open the door "for the quality;" and Norah waited in the parlour; both of them, I am sure, took as much interest in this party, as if it had been their own.

My aunt was magnificent in a black velvet gown, that had come direct from Genoa in some



ambassador's bag, a gold lace band, and a yellow gauze turban, with a full-fledged bird of Paradise on one side. Miss Butler was less ambitiously attired in crimson tabinet. Certainly, when I looked at my aunt, I thought her a very great lady indeed, and did not wonder at the sensation she had made at the Lord-Lieutenant's balls.

At length the guests began to arrive; the Squire of Kilmogany, his wife, and daughters, were the first. The squire, was a little wizzened, paralytic old man, with his bald head sunk upon his breast, and a green shade over his eyes. He was wheeled into the room, in an invalid-chair. My aunt received them with great distinction, but the squire did not seem conscious of anything that was going on.

The Dowager Countess of Rosherville and her niece, Lady Thomasina Killaloo, came the next; I looked at the countess with great reverence, from having heard her opinions so often quoted by my aunt; she was a short, stout woman, with a sharp, hooked nose, and looked like a superannuated parrot. Lady Thomasina was a good-tempered, comfortable-looking, woman, with a pair of merry black eyes, and a laugh and a voice, that might have belonged to a dragoon. I liked her the best of all the people there. Many others followed, chiefly ladies, whose names

I forget ; the above-mentioned were the stars of the evening,—the great plums in my aunt's social pudding.

After Andy and Norah had handed round tea, the company formed themselves into parties, for whist, quadrille, ombre, and other games, which were then fashionable. The old squire was passionately fond of cards, though he could not either hold his cards or play them. He shewed some faint signs of vitality and impatience whilst the tables were forming. His wife wheeled him up to one that stood commodiously, held his cards for him, and screamed into his left ear the progress of the game. She behaved very kindly to him, I thought, but that did not hinder the old turk from going into a passion, and grimacing at her like an angry monkey, because she had lost one of the tricks ; but though she must have felt ashamed of him, she took it very patiently, poor woman.

As for me, I was permitted to sit at one corner of my aunt's table, where she was playing quadrille with the honourable Countess of Rosherville. I am certain that I saw the countess cheat several times ; but the next day, when I told my aunt, she boxed my ears, and asked me how I dared to be passing my observations on one so much above me. But I heard her say to Miss Butler, that Lady Rosherville

was so famous for her luck at cards, and had been caught cheating so often, that now she could scarcely meet with any one who would make a table with her.

The evening passed on very pleasantly. Andy came in from time to time with the silver cake-basket on his arm, and wine and glasses on a salver, which he handed round to the company ; only he was so occupied in listening and looking about, that he once spilled all the cakes, and let the glasses slip off the tray, but luckily none were broken, or else I do not know what my aunt would have said.

Several sharp disputes arose from time to time, about "odd tricks," and once I thought that one old lady was going to fling the silver candlestick at Lady Thomasina, but Andy announced supper at that critical moment, and the storm was for the moment appeased. My aunt desired me to go off to bed, as it was not for a girl like me to sit up to supper. I went unwillingly enough, and heard the sound of voices laughing and talking for a long time afterwards.

The next morning my aunt was very late at breakfast. The whole of the day was employed in putting away all the ornaments, and restoring the room to its usual appearance. I tried to persuade my aunt to keep up the satin cur-

tains, but she would not hear of such a thing. The silver was packed and sent back to Dublin, all the cushions and fillagree boxes restored to their hiding places, and the ends of wax candles were carefully preserved against another occasion. We lived for several days on the fragments of the supper; my aunt made it last so long, that I grew to hate the sight of cakes, and they had become so dry besides. My aunt enjoyed a wonderful accession to her consequence from this party, which, from what I heard her say to Miss Butler, she considered quite equal in elegance to anything she had given when they resided in London, and her brother had a situation under government.

Time passed without any special events to mark its progress, until I was fifteen. I heard frequently from my step-mother. She and my father had continued to reside at Boulogne, and from the tone of some of her later letters, I fancied that she was both anxious and unhappy. It was not so much from what she said, as from the manner in which trifling incidents were narrated together, that I drew this conclusion. She spoke of having parted with Nokes, and mentioned in the same page that my father had been on an excursion to Paris, and been to Chantilly races. She spoke of her own health as not being good, and it once escaped her to say, how glad

she would be if it were possible to return to Bradwood, and for us all to live there together. She always mentioned my father in a manner that shewed she was much attached to him, and the least little kindness or attention he shewed her, was always dwelt on with a certain pride. Poor thing! I fear she did not receive much of that from him! It was not with my aunt that I could ever speak about the impression these letters were beginning to make upon me. My aunt always read them before giving them to me, because she would have considered it improper for me to have had letters to myself; and I never received them, except with the seals broken. But she did not care for the contents, except as they contained news of my father; and she would have thought my step-mother was only doing her duty, if she had put herself on bread and water, to feed him "on cucumbers stuffed with pearls," like the prince in the "Arabian Nights." But Mrs. Nuttal, the poor little actress up stairs, from having had experience in domestic trouble, could read all the indications of my step-mother's letters, and, indeed, it was she who first opened my eyes. She took a real interest in me, and we often talked of what was to become of me in the future. She made use of such magical words, that it seemed the most picturesque thing in

the world to be ruined. She always concluded with,—

“Well, my dear, and if ruin, with its crumbling footsteps, should overtake your fortune, you may then take refuge on the stage, and open to yourself a glorious career!”

“I am sure,” said I, “that I wish something would happen, for unless it does, my aunt will never hear of my doing such a thing as turning actress.”

And then I generally began to settle the dress I would wear for my *début*, and deliberate whether I should look best as *Juliet* or *Isabella*, in the “Fatal Marriage,” a play that had taken a great hold on my imagination. Mrs. Nuttal never failed to strengthen my mind and confirm my resolution by confidently foretelling, that I should not fail to have a coronet at my feet before my first season was over.

“But then, you see, Nuttal dear, that I must stay on the stage until I have earned money enough for my father and Mrs. Donnelly to live upon.”

“My dear child, do not indulge in extravagant hopes; you might as well hope to fill a sieve with water, as to satisfy your father with money. Be moderate in your expectations, and then you will not be disappointed.”

I smile now, to look back on what our "moderate expectations," in those days, used to be ; they were, however, very soon dispelled by a touch of reality, and it is fortunate for me that they were so dispelled.

## CHAPTER X.

I HAD not heard from my step-mother for more than three months, and the payment for my board had fallen into arrears, which subjected my aunt to some inconvenience, and she exhaled into complaints and reproaches to me.

At last, one day, a letter came to my aunt containing the long looked-for remittance, and a letter enclosed for me ;—it came from my step-mother, and was as follows :—

“MY DEAREST CLARISSA,

“I am here in England on somewhat painful business ; I would gladly have spared you the knowledge of the cares of life so early, but circumstances are stronger than myself. It is long since you heard from me, but I have been in too much sorrow and anxiety to write before. I have much to tell you that I cannot write, I shall therefore come over to Dublin by the packet that sails the day after to-morrow. The news I have to tell you will be less painful to us both when I can at the same time as-



sure you of the unalterable affection of your mother,

“MAGDALEN DONNELLY.”

My aunt had received a few lines also, to prepare her to receive her brother's wife ; and she did not doubt, but that some trouble was in prospect ; but as the bank-notes she had just received relieved her from all personal inconvenience, I think she rather enjoyed the excitement of a calamity—which did not touch her—overtaking the family of the Donnellys ; it shewed that they were not quite forgotten, nor sunk out of mind, when a handsome misfortune could find them out. She prepared herself to meet it, by looking up all the ends of wax candle that lay in her stores, to do honour to Mrs. Donnelly, and attired herself in her black velvet gown, minus the gold girdle, which she replaced by one of black bugles, as more adapted to the occasion. Andy was despatched in his livery to meet the packet, and she sat down with severe dignity, to receive whatever blow fate might have in store for her.

As for me, I rushed up stairs to Mrs. Nuttal, to tell her that the storm had come which was to drive me upon the stage, and I shewed her my step-mother's letter ; she read it, and said with a sigh—“ Ah, poor soul ! she knows her own

sorrows ; I can feel for her, having suffered myself ; but now, my child, prepare to bear your part ; if this should be the means of opening a career to you, there will be no cause for you to consider it as a misfortune, far from it."

" Oh, if I can only go upon the stage, I shall be happy !" cried I, with enthusiasm.

" Well, my dear, there are two ways of meeting sorrow ; one is with the sweet resignation of a victim, and the other is with the dignified intrepidity of a heroine ; and I think this latter will suit you best. Let me arrange your hair before you meet your step-mother, that she may be prepared for your resolution."

However, before my heroic toilette was completed, Andy returned from the packet, and I ran down stairs, forgetting everything in my joy at seeing my step-mother after so long a separation.

She looked very worn and anxious, so much so, that I scarcely recognised her.

My aunt received her with a stately reverence and gracious affability, that testified her intention of treating her as worthy to be a Donnelly ; but my step-mother was too tired and too miserable to be aware of the supreme graciousness of her reception. After a few moments, she pleaded fatigue, and begged to be shewn to her room. As my aunt wanted to superintend the

programme of dinner, she was very glad to be excused keeping her guest company. She conducted my step-mother to the foot of the stairs, made her a formal compliment, begging that she would consider herself at home, and then retired, leaving me to take her to my bed-room, where she was to sleep.

As soon as the door was closed, my step-mother sank down in a chair, and burst into tears. She became so violently agitated, that I grew alarmed. At length she was calmer, and I persuaded her to lie down, though I was very anxious to know what had happened. I endeavoured to keep her from exerting herself to talk, but after a few moments' silence, she said,—

“My poor Clarissa, you have much to forgive me! I have done you a great injustice, and the sight of you brings it to my heart. I adopted you, and promised to provide for you,—but I have allowed you to be made a beggar. You are worse off than if I had never seen you. Tell me, can you forgive me?”

She trembled, and looked so wildly, that I feared her head was wandering. I said everything I could think of to soothe her, but she continued,—

“I have not done my duty by you. I have allowed you to live in this miserable place without inquiry, taking you away from school in the

midst of your education. I fancied, from what your father said, that your aunt lived in decency at least ; but I ought to have known better than to believe it, without ascertaining it for myself. And you never complained, poor dear child !”

I assured my step-mother that I had not been at all unhappy, and that I was quite willing to work, to assist to support both her and my father, if they were unfortunate, and that I was prepared to hear the worst she could tell me.

The sight of my step-mother's distress made me feel it incumbent upon me to support and comfort her. I felt as if I had grown a woman all at once, from being a thoughtless girl ; and I think the composure with which I received her evil tidings was a great relief to her mind.

When she was a little recovered, I begged her to give me a history of all that had occurred. From her anxiety to avoid throwing any blame upon my father, and to slur over all the incidents that in the least reflected upon him, her account was very confused and involved ; but the substance of it, as other facts came afterwards to my knowledge, was as follows :—

During my father's residence in Connemara, he had engaged in contraband trade. The friend with whom he had taken refuge was himself concerned in it ; his house on the borders of

one of the numerous bays on the coast, offering almost irresistible facilities. In those days, gentlemen living in a remote part of the country, did not look upon contraband trade as anything dishonourable, not even when it was found out.

The danger and the adventurousness gave a charm to the pursuit, which had, moreover, the advantage of being very profitable.

When he met with Miss Archer, however, the chance of procuring himself a solid position by marrying her, was too good to be lost. He was not at that time without money, but as he had not any intention of expending it upon paying his debts, he induced her to fix their residence in the Isle of Man, which in those days offered an inviolable asylum.

Whilst there, he renewed his contraband connections, not from necessity, but the taste he had for them. In Boulogne it was an organised speculation ; but he contrived to spend money faster than he gained it. If he had possessed the purse of Fortunatus, he would have found the bottom of it.

At the end of seven years, he had come to the end of his own resources, and nearly exhausted his wife's fortune, "who could refuse him nothing," as Nokes had long since told me ; he not only fell into debt, but under the surveill-

ance of the police, for an ugly affair in a gambling house at Paris, with which he had been mixed up,—the laws against debtors are very stringent in France ; and writs, or the equivalent process, are more easily executed there than in Connemara—the result was, that my father was arrested, and thrown into prison ; and, although many circumstances came to light to open the eyes of my step-mother to the character of her husband, if she had not known it before, and to wound her feelings in the most sensible manner ; still, she was attached to him, and rather rejoiced in his ruin, as she hoped, that by stripping herself of everything, she must in the end win a return of his affection. She had come over to England, with the intention of realising all that remained of her property, and after paying his debts, they were to go to Montreal, where she had relations.

She represented my father as being very penitent and remorseful for his past conduct towards her. She shewed me a letter she had received from him just before leaving England. It abounded in touching phrases, he called her an “angel of goodness,” and the “last ray of sunshine that beamed upon his lot ;” but he added an urgent entreaty that she would hasten her affairs, that he might not be left to languish in his miserable position. Of what was to become of me he did not seem to care. He

slightly suggested, that as my aunt had already received so much money with me, she would scarcely refuse to keep me for nothing, until some stroke of fortune should enable him to send for me, adding that it was essential that their resources for America should not be crippled. I already knew quite well what it was to be left to the care of relations who were not paid for it. I had no inclination to renew the experience; and I felt very indignant at the indifference with which my father had always left me to be taken care of by any one that chose. I knew my aunt well enough to foresee the sort of life I should lead with her, if there was to be any charity in the case, and all my fear was, lest my step-mother might be induced to comply.

I grew vehemently eloquent against any such arrangement, and was only pacified by her promise never to consent to it.

What my poor step-mother, with all her English notions of orderliness and respectability, must have suffered in the scrambling, comfortless, shift, lodging-house life she had led almost ever since her marriage, it would be difficult to estimate. I cannot conceive how she submitted to it so patiently, nor by what pretences she glossed over its realities, and accepted her own self-deceptions; but she had become almost as

great an adept as my aunt in giving a good appearance to things.

We were summoned to dinner in the midst of our conversation.

My aunt had made a great effort to do honour to her English sister-in-law, whom she considered a great heiress ; I do not think she was pleased that my step-mother came down stairs without having made any alteration in her travelling dress. She had invited Miss Butler to dine with us, who came stiffened out in her best gown, and my aunt rebuked me rather sharply, for my want of respect in not dressing. She had not as yet the smallest suspicion of what had happened.

During dinner my aunt talked of nothing but our family greatness—praising my father, and making the most minute enquiries, as to the style in which they lived ; she playfully added, that some day she should take a trip, and come and surprise them.

I was astonished to see how well my step-mother kept up the conversation. I did not know then that when people are in great troubles, of which they cannot foresee the end, it is a relief to play with other matters, and to talk of any other subject in the world, except the one that is tormenting them.

After dinner, Miss Butler took her departure, politely observing, that we should no doubt have



many family topics to discuss ; but that she hoped we would favour her with our company to coffee.

As soon as the door closed upon her, my step-mother briefly informed my aunt of all that I have already related ; adding, that what she most regretted was, that she would not be able to continue the salary she had been paying with me beyond the next six months ; however, she would pay it in advance, and at the end of that time, she trusted either to be able to send for me to America, or that some situation as governess, or companion to young ladies, might be found for me.

My aunt burst into a pitiful wail at this announcement, and began to rock herself to and fro in her chair. “ Ah ! ” said she at last, “ Saxon blood has always been unlucky to our family. My poor brother, who might have married any one, to be reduced to want ; and to be obliged to go and lay his bones in a foreign land !—that I should have lived to see the day. And what is to become of this child ; I have bred her up as a Donnelly ; and must she go back to her mother’s people ? ”

“ Clarissa, will probably have to go out in the world, and earn her own living,” said my step-mother ; “ though I will send for her to join us as soon as I possibly can.”

“ Fine talking indeed ! And what would you have her to do, ma’am ? ” said my aunt, drawing herself up, and looking fiercely. “ The Donnellys

have been accustomed to spend money, not to earn it; my niece cannot be allowed to degrade herself. It was my intention to have presented her at the castle, when she had come to a fitting age; when, no doubt, she would have made a suitable marriage. You should pause before you blot out so fair a prospect."

"Willingly would I spare Clarissa all knowledge of sorrow, if bearing it myself could do so. My own friends are exerting themselves in her behalf to find something for her; but from her mother's relations she has nothing to expect; indeed, it was the agreement when I adopted her."

My aunt redoubled her tears, and looked more helpless than ever. I began to cry too at the prospect of being a governess.

"My dear Clarissa," said my step-mother, deprecatingly, "what *is it* you want? What is there I can do?"

"I don't want to be a governess. I want to go on the stage. I know a dozen parts; and Mrs. Nuttal says I could obtain a first rate engagement, and she knows about those things."

If a bombshell had exploded in the room, it could not have caused more dismay than this speech of mine. My aunt recovered herself, and boxed my ears. I was just within her reach, and then I was obliged to confess the secret of my em-

ployment when with Mrs. Nuttal. My aunt's indignation was extreme, and all the more so as she herself had sanctioned the acquaintance. Of course it was treated as a girlish fancy, and I was peremptorily forbidden to think any more of it. After we went up stairs to bed that night, I worked myself up into a paroxysm of rage at the idea of being a governess, and at the disapproval which my cherished scheme had met with.

My poor step-mother, who had troubles enough of her own, endeavoured to make me more reasonable ; but good and excellent as she was, she had not the gift of saying the things that made an impression on me ; in fact, she only aggravated me ; and at last, wearied out in body and mind, she was obliged to leave the passion to exhaust itself. It left me silent and sullen, and I had not even the grace to wish her good night.

I felt very sorry for my unkind conduct of that night, when my step-mother had gone away, and I could make her no amends. It was a source of remorse to me for years afterwards. Whenever it crossed my memory, the recollection of it made me shriek, as if I had received a stab from a sharp knife. The recollection of it pained me long after my step-mother had forgotten it, and I have never entirely forgiven myself.

My step-mother only remained with us two

days. She and my aunt did not get on well together, who, now that there was no more to be gained from her, treated her and spoke to her as though she had been the sole cause of my father's misfortunes.

I did not recover from my disgust at the prospect to which I had been consigned, and I formed a thousand plans for keeping up my consequence, and glossing it over to my pride, that I should find myself so reduced in the world.

My step-mother felt my sullenness very much, and it certainly was both ungrateful and unbecoming, after her kindness. She said all she could imagine to comfort me, by promising to send for me the first moment she should have a settled home to offer me; but she did not say any thing that made me feel strong; and all the good counsels I had received from my own mamma, and good Mrs. Parry, never came into my head; and if for a moment I recollected one of their speeches, it only made me feel more angry and more self-willed. I accompanied my step-mother to the water edge, where she took an affectionate leave of me. Her very last act was to take off her gold watch and chain, and give it to me, to comfort me, bidding me be a good girl, and reiterating her promise to send for me as soon as it should be possible. As I returned home alone, an idea struck me, which I determined to attempt

to carry into effect the following day. To this end I persuaded Andy, who was very fond of me, to leave all his other business, and be in waiting with his car at a little distance from my aunt's house, and promise not to tell her or Norah, or any body else, a word about the matter.

## CHAPTER XI.

I WENT straight to Mrs. Nuttal, whom I had not seen during the time of my step-mother's visit, and told her all that had happened, as well as my project for the next day, which was neither more nor less than to make her accompany me to the manager of the Dublin theatre (of whom she had often spoken to me); if possible to obtain an engagement from him, and to make my appearance before my aunt or any one else could prevent it! At first Mrs. Nuttal had sense enough to try to persuade me to give up this hopeful scheme; but as I was resolute, and after persuasion came to reproaches, I teased her so effectually, that at length she consented.

My aunt never left her bed-room until noon; and of late she had taken the habit of having her breakfast in bed, and did not come down stairs until still later in the day. Mrs. Nuttal and I had therefore plenty of time for our expedition.

It was a fine morning, Andy was punctually waiting for us, and Norah, to whom we said a word on leaving the house, promised to pacify the

old lady if she asked for me. I was then within a few months of being seventeen, and I may say, with truth, that I really was very handsome. I was not tall, but I had a good carriage, and a very well formed figure. I had my mother's clear and delicate complexion. My mouth was rather too large, but it was filled with beautiful and regular teeth. I was generally in good spirits, and whilst I had everything my own way, and was not contradicted, I was very good tempered ; but if I were vexed, I suppose I looked like anything but an angel. Mrs. Nuttal often said she had never seen any one whose countenance changed so suddenly and so completely, and it was from this that she predicted my success upon the stage.

She had so often assured me that I possessed every requisite for a first-rate actress, that I never doubted but that the manager would be delighted to engage me. I indulged in the pleasantest visions of seeing my name in large, coloured letters on all the walls, announcing my appearance, and I even expected that embassies would be sent from all the chief managers of the other theatres in the kingdom, to engage me on any terms. These anticipations were interrupted by the car stopping at a great dingy building without windows. Mrs. Nuttal, after desiring Andy to wait, dived with me down a street, so narrow that a car could not pass through, and so dirty, that I was frightened at it.

"Come on," said Mrs. Nuttal, "this is the stage door."

We went up a steep step, into a small dirty room, where several ill-dressed, idle-looking men were standing about, and hanging over a dusty fire in a small grate. One man was seated on a high stool, writing in a ledger. A bench against the wall was the only other furniture. Mrs. Nuttal asked for the manager, and the men all turned and stared at me in a manner that put me out of countenance, and made me ready to cry with annoyance. Mrs. Nuttal at length having finished her conversation with the man at the desk, took me to a little side room, where she knocked at a green-baize door: here we saw a homely, hard-featured man, who was sitting at a table, writing; he looked keenly at me as we entered, and enquired in a business-like way what we wanted.

I looked at Mrs. Nuttal to speak, for by this time I had become so nervous that I heartily wished myself safe at home again.

Mrs. Nuttal only replied,—

"Nay, tell your own tale, my dear, it will be better than anything I can say."

I then said, in a most trembling and almost inaudible voice, that I wished to go upon the stage, and that Mrs. Nuttal had been giving me instructions.

The manager looked at me, as if considering



what he should say ; at last he bid me recite any speech from any play I chose.

This frightened me still more, but as he waited in perfect silence for me to begin, I at last, with a most quivering and uncertain voice, commenced a passage out of "The Fair Penitent," but, although I had frequently gone through it to Mrs. Nuttall, I now stumbled and made mistakes at every second line. When I had finished, Mrs. Nuttall began very volubly to wonder, and to declare that I had never done so *ill* before. The manager made a sign to her to be silent, and then, looking kindly at me, he said,—

"My dear good young lady—for good I am certain you are—listen to me. You have allowed your imagination to be run away with by the stories of an old woman who ought to have known better. You say it is against the consent of your friends that you wish to appear on the stage. Poor child! you do not know what you are wanting. If I had a daughter like you, I would sooner see her dead, and buried with a parish funeral, than on the stage. As yet, you do not know what evil is—may you ever be kept from it! You think it would be a fine thing to be dressed up in spangles and act tragedy ; but I must tell you, my dear, that at present you are not even competent to be a silent attendant, which is a part that would hardly satisfy your

ambition. You are very pretty, but I tell you again that you have not the peculiar talent requisite for the stage. I am speaking to you now as a man of business, whose interest it is to get a good company together, and it is my trade to judge of the qualifications of those who offer themselves."

I am sure I looked terribly disappointed.

"My dear young lady, you do not know the sort of life you wish to enter. Have you ever been behind the scenes?"

I told him that I had never even seen a play.

He smiled, and bid me follow him. He took me to a dark space, where there was no light, except what came through a side door that was open. At first I could discern nothing, but as my eyes grew accustomed to the obscurity, I saw a number of persons walking about and declaiming speeches out of little books, or rolls of paper, they held in their hands. Men in paper caps and shirt sleeves, like carpenters, were working at benches, and others were dragging in what looked to me like the sides of a street, and we had to get out of their way as well as we could. Painters, with cans of paint, were mounted on ladders, and seemed to be working at the inside of a house. A vast quantity of what seemed to be lumber, was reared and piled up in all directions, whilst high above our heads, were ropes and heavy hang-

ing things, that every moment seemed about to drop on our heads. A distant light fell upon them from above, which enabled us to see them.

When the men who were going about with books in their hands came near, I saw they were the same who had so much disconcerted me on our entrance, and I drew closer to the manager.

"Well," said he, "now you see a play in preparation. It does not look very enticing;—the ladies and gentlemen are rehearsing their parts. Would it tempt you to come every morning, not to be one of the leading characters, but to come on—one day, it might be, as a page,—another as an attendant, with half a dozen words to say? Now, look at the house itself;—there it is before you."

I could only dimly discern something like a cave; but the manager spoke to one of the work-people, and in a few minutes a little shutter was thrown open in the opposite distance, through which the dusty sunshine came streaming in, shewing a sort of balcony, with tiers of seats in it, which went a long way back; and then two stories above them of similar seats. In the centre of the house there were rows of benches on the floor. A great chandelier came down from the roof, which seemed to be painted, but it looked very dingy and dirty. Lamps hung down

from the front of the balcony, which were covered over with sheets.

"Those," said the manager, turning to me, "are the places where the company sit. Fancy them all filled with people, and in a blaze of light, and you called to come forwards to act your part, and speak your speeches, so as to be distinctly heard by every one in the remotest part of the house; and all those hundreds of eyes looking at you, ready to find fault if you did not please them!"

"I thought," said I, "the theatre was such a beautiful place, all light and splendour."

"Of course it looks better by candle-light," replied he; "everything is intended to be seen then. But *this* is what it *really is*, no matter how it may look to those in the front. This is the place where you would have to be, and these are the things and people you would have to live amongst. There are, besides, other things, of which it is not needful that I should speak now, as I hope you are not going to be exposed to them."

"But have there not been actresses who have become peeresses, and others who have married men of quality?" I asked.

"Yes, my dear, and I will count them for you on my fingers, but there are hundreds and thousands who have drudged for years upon the

stage, and retired in their old age to poverty and a garret. Do you envy Mrs. Nuttal? and yet I recollect her a very pretty woman, and a favourite actress. You see every body has forgotten that, except herself perhaps. The fact is, my dear, that men and women of real genius and strong character can, and do, make their way, and make themselves respected, in whatever state of life they adopt; but unless you have the ability to attain the first rank, the stage is an intolerable drudgery, and a most objectionable calling for a young woman. And now for one moment to treat it as a matter of business! you must pardon me for saying that you have no genius for acting. I dare say that you could recite very nicely before your looking-glass, or perhaps in a small drawing-room before partial friends, but you would not stand a moment before an audience who do not care a straw for anything but their own amusement. My dear young lady, I have spoken to you as I would to my own daughter, if she had taken a similar fancy. Go home and take my advice, don't listen to any more of Mrs. Nuttal's stories; she is an old goose, who will teach you nothing but vanity, which is the ruin of half the women in the world." He gave me his arm to lead me back, looked into the room where we had left Mrs. Nuttal, and he

did not quit us until he had seen us to the car, and heard Andy ordered to drive home.

All the way I did not once speak, I was horribly ashamed and mortified, and sat amongst the ruins of my brilliant cloud castles, as much crushed and annihilated as they. But I never shall forget the sensation of intense thankfulness, when I found myself once more safe in my aunt's dingy parlour!

Then, the sense of the horrible imprudence of which I had been guilty came upon me, for to have been saved from carrying it into effect, did not take from my folly in intending it. All the scene at the theatre came back to me with a sense of loathing and disgust; I felt as if I had been plunged up to my neck in mire; and it was many days before I recovered my own self-respect.

Luckily, my aunt had not missed me, and asked no embarrassing questions. A great part of my mortification arose from having done clandestinely what I was afraid would be found out. I would have been thankful to confess, either to my step-mother or Mrs. Parry, and would have borne patiently any reprimand or punishment; but I felt that it was of no use to tell my aunt, except to throw her into a passion, and to bring Andy and Mrs. Nuttal, my companions, into trouble with her. Right or wrong, I made up

my mind to keep my own counsel; but for weeks afterwards I was terrified at going out with my aunt in the car, lest any of the people I had seen at the theatre should recognise me, and speak to me.

I took an intense disgust to the very idea of acting, and slackened considerably in my visits to Mrs. Nuttal. Luckily for me, very shortly after my adventure, she received an invitation from her brother, whom she had not seen for several years, and who had returned from India much improved in fortune. This, of course, induced her to pack up all her small property, and hasten to join him at Cheltenham. She wrote to me once, to tell me how prosperous and comfortable she was; and that, although her brother was sometimes very cross, yet, as she had been accustomed to the humours of her late husband, she did not mind it, and could manage him very easily. I was glad that so comfortable a prospect opened for her at the close of her life, and I was not sorry to have a handsome ending put to an acquaintance that had so nearly led me into an act of rashness, which I should vainly have regretted all my life.

As to my aunt, she was silent and mysterious. I secretly and often wondered by what accident she had never perceived my absence on the day of my expedition to the theatre; but the reason

was not long in appearing. She had, on that day, been busy writing letters, in her bed-room, to all her most influential acquaintances, and to the uncle of the Donnellys, Sir Tiberius, who, an old man with a large family, all expecting to be provided for as became a baronet's children, was not likely to have either power or inclination to assist a distant relative, whom he had never seen. But as all my aunt's acquaintance and correspondence piqued themselves upon being punctiliously polite, answers to her letters began to arrive, all sealed with magnificent impressions of crests and "coat armories."

My aunt deputed me to read them aloud to her, after she herself had carefully cut round the seals, to avoid breaking them. They all contained expressions of compliment, and the politest regrets at not being able to forward her views with respect to her niece.

Amongst the rest came a letter from the secretary of the Lord-Lieutenant, courteously stating that all the situations in her ladyship's household were filled up.

It would have amused an indifferent person to hear all my aunt's observations and speculations upon the different negatives she received, —the more than bee-like skill with which she contrived to extract some hope from them all, and the complacency with which she dwelt upon



the polite terms of compliment in which her letters were answered.

At last, a letter came from the Dowager Countess of Rosherville, saying that her friend Mrs. Ormsby wished to find a companion for her two daughters,—one twelve, and the other fourteen,—who could form their manners, and teach them a good English pronunciation. Lady Rosherville considered that this would exactly be what my aunt wished for me.

She concluded her letter with a violent panegyric on the charms and excellencies of Mrs. Ormsby, in the course of which it appeared there was no salary attached to the situation, and that I was “to make myself generally useful, and to be always cheerful, obliging, and full of alacrity.”

My aunt was charmed with the prospect; she entered at once into negotiations, and it was finally settled that I was to go to Mrs. Ormsby, to fill a situation, the functions of which were somewhat vague, and the position I was to hold left extremely undefined; but my aunt was afraid of losing an advantageous opening, by shewing a disposition to ask troublesome questions, and she did not for a moment imagine that anything short of the highest respect could be shewn to a Donnelly.

Part of the fifty pounds that my grandfather had bequeathed to me, were drawn and ex-

pended to equip me suitably for my new office. As my wardrobe had never been renewed except for dresses, and a few other indispensable articles, since I left Mrs. Parry, it may be supposed how much I stood in need of a respectable outfit.

## CHAPTER XII.

AT last all the preparations for my departure were completed, and my place was taken for the following morning inside the mail, which went as far as Ballyraggan Gap. There, Mrs. Ormsby had arranged to send her jaunting-car to meet me, and take me on to Ballybully Town, where she resided, and which was about five miles across the country.

On the evening previous to my departure, my aunt stirred the fire, and drawing herself with great stateliness into her arm-chair, began to harangue me on my future course and prospects.

The chief points upon which she insisted, were first, that I should on no account ever forget what was due to myself, nor allow myself to be trampled upon by anybody: the next was, to beware how I encouraged "the presumptuous attentions of the other sex," and on no account to accept any offer of marriage without first consulting her. Indeed, she dwelt so much upon the offers and attentions I was likely to receive from young men, that she said

nothing of any other species of trials or difficulties which were liable to beset me.

She warned me impressively against the designs of insidious young men, and the desperate schemes of daring noblemen, who inveigle lovely and unsuspecting young women into a carriage and six, and marry them in spite of the disapproval of their friends. She particularly recommended me to study the conduct of Harriet Byron, in a similar emergency. She also pointed her moral by a long story about a friend of hers, a lovely young heiress to an immense property, who was run away with to a lonely farm-house, by six men in masks, and forced to put on a gold-laced riding-habit and hat, which had been placed there for her, and then to mount a spirited horse, and ride across the country, for three days, till they arrived at a dilapidated mansion, where the owner was hiding on account of his debts; and forced to marry him, and endow him with all her property (although she was engaged to a charming young officer of dragoons, who afterwards was killed); and how she was brought back to Dublin, and obliged to protest that she had done it of her own free will!

I have met with many trials in my life-time, but I am happy to say that I have been so fortunate as to escape those against which my

aunt so carefully prepared me. My aunt liked above all things to make set exhortations, and she imagined that she excelled in them ; and in the course of this long harangue to me, she grew comforted for the disappointment she had sustained, in being obliged to send me, her niece, out to a situation, instead of seeing me presented at the Lord-Lieutenant's court. Since a reverse of fortune had come, there was at least a certain consolation in dressing it up in sweeping robes, and giving it an imposing air of noble distress.

At the conclusion of her remarks, my aunt lightly touched upon the fact, that I must henceforth depend upon myself, as her income was barely sufficient for her own support.

She then embraced me and took leave of me ; for I was to depart as early as six o'clock the next morning. She also drew what she called "one of her ancestral rings" from her finger, and presented me with it, and begged I would ever carefully preserve it, and allow no distress to induce me to part with it !

I had been very busy all day, preparing for my departure, and was so thoroughly fatigued, that I fell asleep the moment my head touched the pillow ; and no dreams, or anticipations of the world I was entering, broke my repose during the last night I slept under a guardian's roof.

The next morning I was roused by Norah,

dressed by the dim light of a rush candle ; and my boxes were corded. Andy had brought his car, and was waiting for me in the kitchen ; Norah had prepared some breakfast, and then wrapping herself in her blue cloak, declared she would come and see the last of me. It was a dim moonlight morning, and a white mist covered the ground. Andy drove quickly into the town, and we were not a moment too soon ; the horses were already harnessed ; Norah embraced me most affectionately, and Andy wished me all the good luck in the world, and of the other added to it ! the guard blew his horn,—the ostler let go the horses' heads, and we drove off. I looked back as long as I could discern anything, till Andy, and Norah, and the car were hidden from me by the mist and the distance.

The excitement and hurry of departure, had kept up my spirits hitherto ; but they now began to flag ; there was no one else inside, and I cried without hinderance, till I had no more strength left.

For the first time I realised that I was standing alone in the world, with no one to depend upon but myself ; and I cannot express the sick affright that seized upon me. It was a panic, like that which I can fancy overtaking one walking upon a narrow ledge of rock, with nothing between him and the precipice below.

I was, in reality, no worse off than I had been

for some time past, but I was suddenly aroused to a consciousness of my position. I felt that I belonged to no one; and that whatever home or kindness I might find, would not be mine by right, but would come from the spontaneous kindness of others; I had no claims on any one in the world. To those who have not known this feeling, I cannot convey the desolate, helpless, exposed condition, in which I felt myself.

My step-mother, had indeed promised to send for me as soon as she had it in her power; but she and my father were on their way to America, which was so far off, that it was literally hoping from another world. In those days, voyages to America were formidable undertakings, not the few days' journey that they are now.

I have not recently spoken of my mother; I very rarely ever mentioned her; but the sense of her loss was always present and deep in my heart; and no matter how lively I might seem, or how well amused I might be, the thought of her would come to me at any moment. I suppose when any one has once known a deep sorrow like this, life and the world are never the same to any of us again,—we are never properly happy afterwards. I was very young when she died; but the sorrow has only become deeper the longer I have lived; it may for a while have been covered, and overgrown

with the affairs of life, but there it always is ; and whenever any other trial or sorrow comes, it always rouses that great grief, as if something alive within me had been touched and wakened.

On this particular morning I felt very miserable and cowardly ; external circumstances seemed only a type of what I had to look for in the world. It was growing daylight ; but the weather had turned to a small drizzling mist, and the striped hedges and bare black trees, were threaded with drops of rain that had not strength to fall off ; and the chill creeping damp, penetrated to the very marrow of my bones. As we proceeded, the fields and farms disappeared, and the road entered a flat black waste of bog ; and if there were anything better in the distance, the fog prevented me from seeing it.

At length, we entered a small dirty market town, where the coach stopped for ten minutes, to breakfast. The inn was new, but bare and disorderly. The guard and coachman were both very kind to me, and the mistress of the house, dirty and slatternly as she was, with the cares of a large wash upon her besides, was very kind to me too ; she gave me a great deal of flattery and sympathy with a sweet toned voice, that reminded me of poor Norah,—and it certainly made me feel much less miserable. About noon, we reached Ballyraggan Gap, where I was to leave the



mail; but neither car nor driver were visible. At the entrance of a narrow, cross-country road, about a dozen hovels, built of loose stones and turf, stood huddled together in a hollow by the road side. A troop of naked jabbering women and children came running out at the sound of the coach, and this place I learned was nothing less than Ballyraggan Gap itself.

"I am very sorry to leave you all alone here, miss," said the guard, compassionately; "we are obliged to keep our time, owing to the letters, or else I am sure we would wait with you till your carriage came up. The people here are rough to look at, but they are harmless enough, and you will be quite safe. Here, you Biddy Howlagan, there!" cried he, at the top of his voice—a tall gaunt woman with a patient, stupid-looking face coming out of one of the hovels—"here is a young lady waiting to be met by the carriage from Ballybully Town; take her into your place, and let her sit by your fire till it comes: sure it is yourself that knows how to speak to the quality."

The woman answered something in a *patois* I did not understand.

"You will be all right now," said the guard.

The coachman had by this time become very impatient—he drove off at a great pace, and was in a moment hid from my sight by a turn in the road.

The woman took up my largest trunk, and, turning to me said,—

“Step in then, miss ; sure it is not the place for the likes of you—but you will be out of the rain, any way.”

She took me into one of the hovels, where the only difference was that it was dark instead of daylight, the rain came through the roof, and the floor was a perfect puddle. A man, an old woman, and a number of children, were about beginning dinner ; a heap of smoking potatoes were in a hollow in the middle of the table.

The woman forced me to a dry spot beside the turf fire, and proceeded to pick out some of the best potatoes. I saw her suddenly become perplexed—she had neither plate nor dish to bring them on. I went up to the table and said that I would sit there, if they would make room for me. My trunk served me for a seat, and we all helped ourselves. I suppose I was very hungry, for in all my life I never tasted anything so good as those potatoes, and there was a certain respectful hospitality that made me feel at my ease amongst them. The appearance of the man, however, was not at all prepossessing—it was half ferocious, half stupid ; but whilst I was thinking how frightened I should have felt if I had met him under any other circumstances, he told me he would run down himself to the great house,

and tell them I was come, as may-be they had forgot. He went, and returned with a conveyance for me, and though the distance was seven miles, absolutely refused to accept the half-crown I offered him, though I asked him earnestly: I, however, gave it one of the children to play with, as I went out.

The man helped me into the car, and covered me with a large cloak, with a certain dexterity as well as good-will, and wished me good day with a bow that was anything but awkward. Of course all the dwellers in that *Gap* turned out to see me off, but the man drove them away, and would not allow them to beg.

I thanked him as well as I could, and quite made up my mind that I would come again, and bring some clothes for the children; but when I was able to execute this resolve, I found the man was in prison on a charge of murder, and all the family had gone away.

The man-servant sent to meet me, was an Englishman, exceedingly supercilious, though unimpeachably correct in his replies to the few questions I volunteered.

At length we reached Ballybully Town, and very thankful I was, for I was cold, wet, and tired. I saw no town at all, but a great rambling grey-stone house, with a Grecian portico, and a colony of stables behind. The approach to

it was up what had once been an avenue, but most of the trees had been cut down, and nothing but the trunks and a few straggling saplings remained, to mark what once had been.

We did not go to the front entrance, but went through a pair of folding gates into the stable-yard, where our arrival was greeted by a chorus of dogs of all kinds. The car drew up at the entrance to the servants' hall; the man who had driven me threw the reins to some stable boys, and assisted me to alight. I followed him in, but there was no one to receive me, several servants were passing about, who stared at me without speaking. The man who had brought me, took no further charge of me, except to recommend me to sit down by the fire, which was burning at the upper end of the hall. I enquired for Mrs. Ormsby, but he paid no attention and walked away. At length the housekeeper came, who in her manner and appearance reminded me a little of my aunt Donnelly.

She looked at me from head to foot, and made a sort of half-apology that I should have been kept waiting in the servants' hall, and invited me to go to her room. It was a comfortable room enough, with a bright fire burning in it. She told me that the family were at dinner, but that Mrs. Ormsby should be informed of my arrival as soon as she returned to the drawing-room.

She invited me to have some tea with her, which I accepted; and she informed me that the reason of my delay at the Gap was, because there was a dispute whose business it was to fetch me; the coachman had declared he had only engaged to drive the mistress and the young ladies.

I endeavoured to keep up the conversation, but she was extremely distant and formal, and I could make no impression upon her. She too was English, and kept the servants at a great distance, who I found all hated her very much.

At length dinner was over, and the footman came in with a message to say, that Mrs. Ormsby would come and speak with Miss Donnelly in a few minutes.

"Mrs. Ormsby is distant in her manners, and perhaps you will not feel at home with her all at once; indeed all the family hold themselves very high, but you must not mind it."

As the housekeeper spoke, the door was thrown open, and a tall, thin, very ill-tempered looking woman entered; she had evidently been very handsome at one time, but she had a harsh, disagreeable voice, and a coarse brogue.

"Are you the young person mentioned to me by Lady Rosherville?" said she, addressing me through her eye glass. She neither told me to sit down, nor did she wait for my reply, but con-

tinued : " Well, I hope you will suit me ; it is rather a risk to engage any one without seeing them first ; but I have great confidence in Lady Rosherville's judgment. I hope you are good-tempered and fond of children ? This is your first situation, I believe !

I replied, " that it was."

" What time did you leave Dublin ? it was late for you to arrive. Ah ! I forgot you were detained amongst those people at the Gap. I am sure I gave orders for some one to meet you. How did it happen, Mrs. Lawson ?"

Mrs. Lawson explained.

" Ah well ! I only hope you have caught no fever, or anything of that kind—be sure you change all your clothes ; it was imprudent to enter such a place."

As she spoke, her features might have been cut in wood, for any expression they had ; she held herself very stiffly, and when she turned, she moved her whole person like a soldier facing about. When she addressed me, her cold, grey eye went past me, as if she were looking in the distance ; altogether, there was a cold, insolent ill-breeding in her manner, such as I have never seen equalled.

" I suppose there is a room prepared for Miss Donnelly?" said she, addressing the housekeeper, but looking at the chimney-piece.

"I have had the green attic above the nursery got ready. Where is it your wish, ma'am, that she should take her meals?"

"The chief part of her time will be taken up in the nursery, amongst the children, she may as well take her meals there. It can be altered afterwards if there is occasion."

"Oh, by the way, Lawson, your master complained of the fish to-day, it was terribly overdone."

She was leaving the room, but paused to say,—

"You can retire when you please, I shall see you in the morning; I do not wish you to rise later than seven."

"I dare say you will be glad to go to your room now," said Mrs. Lawson, as soon as the door closed.

I thankfully assented to the proposal, and the under-housemaid, who answered her summons, was directed to take me and my boxes up-stairs to the green attic.

What a comfort it is that there is always a night's sleep to intervene between us and our day's work!

## CHAPTER XIII.

MRS. ORMSBY'S family consisted of her two eldest daughters,—one sixteen, the other fifteen, and there were three young children in the nursery, ranging from four to ten years old.

There had, until recently, been two nurses, but one having left, her place was supplied by a young girl, and I was taken in as an anomalous supernumerary. I was to keep the children's wardrobe in order, and indeed, everybody's wardrobe, so far as it was possible; Mrs. Ormsby was much disappointed that I did not understand dress-making, that I might have been able to assist the lady's-maid. I taught the children their lessons in the first rudiments of learning. I was the nominal companion of the two eldest girls; they either came to me in the nursery, or I took my work into their mamma's dressing-room, where I sat for an hour to hear them read, and to give them the English accent; Mrs. Ormsby sitting by to profit by the lesson, and to see that we never forgot our relative positions.

I do not suppose that I was considered ex-



actly a servant, for I was called Miss Donnelly, and received no wages ; in all other respects my position was sufficiently doubtful, but every detail shewed that I was considered as anything but a "companion" to the children. I dined with them in the nursery ; silver forks were always laid for them, but the nurse and I had steel forks, and pewter tea-spoons at breakfast.

I was forbidden to wear low dresses or a necklace ; and Mrs. Ormsby gave me a couple of large aprons with pockets, such as her lady's-maid wore, and desired that I would never appear without one. On Sunday, I went to church in the outside car, along with Mrs. Lawson, the housekeeper, and the lady's-maid.

Sometimes I was sent for after dinner, into the drawing-room, to read aloud. There was often company staying in the house, but I was never introduced to any one, nor expected to speak. A small table and candle were placed for me outside the circle, and a short distance apart from it.

Reading aloud was a thing I could do extremely well. I had naturally a taste for it, and a pleasant voice, which had been cultivated, and if Mrs. Nuttal had taught me nothing else, she had greatly improved my reading. I used to read on these occasions whatever book was placed before me, and continued till I was desired

to desist, and then I retired without saying a word, or having a word said to me. I slept in the little green attic; it had a pent-house window in the sloping roof, the view from it was very pretty, and commanded a wide extent of country. I had the great comfort of having a room all to myself, for sometime at least, until I was removed to sleep in the lady's-maid's room, to make way for an additional footman.

As to being waited upon, or receiving assistance from any servant in the establishment, that was not to be thought of for an instant. The under-housemaid was a very good-natured girl, but she had a great deal to do, and I soon found that my only chance of avoiding impertinence and grumbling, was to give trouble to no one, and depend entirely upon myself.

After the experience of the first two days, during which my bed was left unmade, my room unsorted till evening; and I had to wait three quarters of an hour before I could find any one who would fasten my dress, which even then was done in a way that gave me great disgust; I set to work, and altered all my dresses, so that I might be able to fasten them myself without assistance. I always afterwards made my own bed, and arranged my room to my liking before I went down stairs in the morning. I did

not do it in a good spirit, but with a haughty bitterness that made me feel uncomfortable, but did no harm to any one else ; indeed, although it was my mode of protesting against the insolence that obliged me to do such "menial offices," nobody took any notice of it, and I was allowed to steel myself in peace against the slights and mortifications to which I was daily subject, until I had learned my lesson of discipline.

Sometimes I determined to make myself recognised in some way in the house ; but I might just as well have tried to talk in an exhausted receiver ; unless I had seen and suffered from it, I could not have imagined that any persons could so completely have separated themselves, and kept aloof from all sympathy with the human beings composing their household.

The domestics were represented by their offices ; they were merely the machinery to promote the comfort of the family, and they had as completely lost their individuality, as if they had belonged to a gang of convicts, with numbers instead of names.

Mr. Ormsby was a county magistrate ; a little old gentleman with grey hair, and a thin, proud face, that looked as if it were always drawing back. I do not think he ever learned my name, for if ever he had occasion to address me, he always began "my good girl." It was not the duties I had to

perform that were so difficult or disagreeable ; I would have done all I had to do, and more than all, with great good will, if only I might have been recognised as capable of taking some interest in what was to be done ; but it was all one course of giving orders upon their side, and receiving them upon mine, and the work considered as if it had come out of a machine.

Mrs. Ormsby never spoke what could be called harshly to me, during the whole time I was with her, but then, she never seemed altogether aware of my existence. She spoke in a dawdling, absent tone, without looking at me. If I addressed any question to her, she always either looked over my head at the wall, or else on one side, whilst she replied ; and the young ladies took after their mamma. They had been taught to consider it a mark of English high breeding to look absent and uninterested, except on rare occasions. It was like living with so many bags of wool.

The servants were a body amongst themselves, and had their own world and their own interests, from which they excluded the family as rigidly as the family excluded them ; but I was by myself, and belonged to nobody.

Now I do not think the Ormsbys were either right or kind, in their mode of treating their dependents, but so far as I myself was concerned, it was, perhaps, as good a place as I could

have been sent to. During the time that I was with my aunt, I had been so much puffed up, by false notions of my birth and importance, and so filled with vanities of all kinds, that I had acquired very exaggerated ideas of myself, as well as idle and desultory habits, all which required rooting out, and extirpating without pity, if I were ever to become a character worth anything. No friends, nor any one, with the ordinary scruples of humanity, would have been able to give me the discipline which would have been strong enough to eradicate the foolishness that had taken hold of my heart. I am quite certain, speaking from my own experience, that whenever we are placed in peculiarly disagreeable circumstances, that there is some needful lesson contained in them, besides their unpleasantness; and when we have learned the lesson they were intended to convey, we are relieved from them, and not until then.

This mode of deliverance had not yet dawned for me. I did all that was required of me, partly from an instinct that was blinder than a resolution, and partly because I was afraid of being sent back to my aunt, while I had no hope of a better situation; but I kept a proud and bitter spirit, and endeavoured by every possible means to make a line of demarcation between myself and the servants. I am

sure I treated the nurse, who was the individual with whom I came most in contact, with an indifference and haughtiness which might have been modelled upon Mrs. Ormsby herself. I had it all for my own benefit ; I made myself extremely uncomfortable by the bitter spirit I cultivated, and shut myself out from intercourse with perhaps the only person in the household who was worth securing for a friend. All those displays which we disguise under the heroic and somewhat attractive term of *pride*, cut far more keenly into the comfort of our own bosom, than into the sensibilities of those for whom they are intended.

After I had been at the Ormsbys about three months, the youngest boy, a lovely little fellow of six years old, was taken ill, of what proved to be scarlet fever. The Irish have a horror of infection that amounts to a panic. I had never had the fever, but I was not afraid, and the office of attending upon the child seemed to fall naturally to me. I was fond of this child, and this illness of his lifted me out of a black, bitter, miserable state of mind, which caused me intense suffering. He was left entirely to my charge—the nurse would have helped me willingly enough, but she had to go away with the other children, who were at once removed from the house.

After a severe struggle for life the child reco-

vered, and neither I nor any one else in the house took the fever. I was almost sorry when the dear little fellow was pronounced quite well, and allowed to join the rest, for I then fell back into the dreary joylessness of my old position. The doctors praised me much, and told Mrs. Ormsby that, humanly speaking, she owed her child to my careful nursing.

Mrs. Ormsby was very glad to have her child restored, and very glad that I had been there to nurse it; but she could not get out of her old supercilious indifference—perhaps it had become her second nature, and she testified her sense of my conduct in her own fashion. She summoned me to her dressing-room, and said,—

“Donnelly, Mr. Ormsby and myself are much pleased with your conduct during the illness of Master Robert; your behaviour would have done credit to an older person; your master has desired me to give you a new gown, as a mark of his approbation, and I have added a suitable shawl.”

She handed me a brown paper parcel which lay beside her on the sofa; I took it because she held it out to me, but I would rather she had struck me than given me that present. It was as much as I could do to refrain from flinging it on the floor; to say “thank you,” would have choked me.

"Well," said she, observing my hesitation ; "I have told you that we are pleased with your conduct. I should have thought you would have been glad to be made aware of it."

"I did not do it to please you," I said, almost fiercely, "but because I loved the child, and there was no one else to nurse him."

At that moment I detested her ! sitting there, in her insolent complacency, measuring out her approval to me as the highest possible reward for having risked my life to save her child ; not but what I would have done the same thing again, if it had been needed, but it was intolerable, that she should dole out her tepid approbation, as the finality of what my conduct was worth.

"Really, Donnelly," said she, startled into looking at me for once ; "if you fly out into such unbecoming tones to your superiors, when they are shewing you favour, I fear you will not make many friends ; of course we are aware that you only did your duty in nursing Master Robert, but we wish to mark our approval of it, nevertheless. Will you desire the nurse to step here, as I wish to speak to her."

I returned to the nursery, and flung my hateful present on the ground, stamped upon it, and threw myself into a chair, gasping with rage. The children were frightened and clung to the nurse, who came to me and laid hold of



my hand, which was clenched and contracted with rage.

"My dear Miss Donnelly," she said, in a grave, gentle voice, which soothed me in spite of myself; "you are ill, you have overwatched yourself of late, come with me." And with a gentle touch, that somehow reminded me of my mother's, she led me into the inner room, and having seated me in her own large chair, she left me alone, and closed the door.

After a while I began to cry with passionate convulsive sobs: at length, as I grew calmer or more exhausted, I felt a little, soft, warm arm put round my neck, and a little hand endeavouring to pull down mine, which covered my face. Robert, my little charge, nestled up to me, and said,—

"Dear Donnelly, don't cry; I love you so much," and the child began to cry too. "You have made yourself ill, nurse says, by sitting up with me, and if you die, what shall I do!"

The poor child began to sob violently, frightened at the idea he had conjured up. The touch of his little arms clinging to me, loosened my heart from its bitterness. I covered him with kisses, and used all my efforts to calm the agitation into which he had thrown himself, and which in his still weak state, alarmed me for the consequences.

The nurse came in to call Robert to his supper;

she bid me lie down on the bed, and keep quiet for a little while ; she brought me a cup of tea, and tended me with a motherly, loving-kindness, that brought tears from me, but tears very different in their spirit to those I had recently been shedding. After she had left me, I fell into a dreamy slumber, that seemed like a lucid interval after an attack of madness. I was not quite asleep, by my head was clear, and I felt very quiet. Many thoughts drifted through my mind, without, as it seemed, giving me the trouble to think them.

How long I lay I do not know; when I opened my eyes, it was quite night, a light was burning on the table, and the nurse was sitting beside it reading.

Then it came quite clearly into my mind that I had behaved very proudly and unkindly to that old woman ; as much so as was in my power. I had prided myself on keeping her at a distance, and treating her much as Mrs. Ormsby and the young ladies had treated her. I had been determined to shew her that, though obliged to sit with her, I would not be the companion of a servant.

The old woman had taken it meekly—had never put herself forward ; but treated me with a respect, which I had conceived arose from my manner of keeping her in her place ; she had taken this opportunity to shew me kindness ;

but numberless other little acts of respect and kindness that, at the time I had scarcely noted, now came to my remembrance,—and I felt very remorseful; it seemed to me that I had behaved much worse to this old woman, than ever Mrs. Ormsby had behaved to me; just then the nurse took off her spectacles, and turned to look at me.

“Come here, nurse,” said I.

She came to the bedside, and asked me how I felt now.

“Quite well, but I have something to say to you,—sit down there on the bed, where I can see you.”

“Nurse, I have behaved very ill to you ever since I came, and I am very sorry for it; will you forgive me?”

“Eh, my dear child! I have nothing to forgive you,” said the old woman.

“You have been short and distant with me sometimes, when I would have been glad to be friendly; but you had a deal to put up with, I saw that; and you were not accustomed to being made to keep company with a servant; and I saw it came hard to you.”

“Yes,” said I, “but I never considered that I was doing to you exactly what was hurting me in others. I did not deserve you should have been so good to me to night.”

"Eh, bless you my child ! I have not been good at all that I know of ; but now that we are talking, tell me what it was that had vexed you?"

"Why Mrs. Ormsby had been telling me in her supercilious way, that she was satisfied with my conduct during little Robert's illness, and gave me a gown and a shawl as a reward—as if one came into the world for nothing but to please *her*, and as if *her* approbation alone were worth more than my life, if it had been spent for her. I cannot tell you how angry it made me. It is all very well to do as much as possible to serve others ; I know I did nothing but what was right,—nothing but what I would do over again for the child ; but I cannot bear that woman to tell me, she is satisfied with me, as if she were the queen of the world, and her approbation was to be received as though it had to come down from heaven before it could reach me ! Oh ! it made me mad—it was so insolent. If she had only spoken to me like a human being, and said she was glad to see her child restored ; it would have been all right, but she has no feeling !"

The old nurse smiled, and shook her head.

"Ah !" said I, impatiently, "I cannot make you understand the aggravation."

"My dear child," replied she, "I do understand quite well all you would say, and if you

always protest as strongly against all low aims and second motives, it will be well for you. There is but one motive, my child, high enough and strong enough to be the spring of all our actions, and that is, to do right for the love of right, to do all things as in the presence, and for the love of God, who is our Master, to whom we owe an account of every word we utter, of every thought of our heart. You felt insulted, when Mrs. Ormsby offered you her approval as a motive and reward, it hurt your pride and self-love; you did not feel that she was great enough, or grand enough to set herself up above you for a motive. But, my dear child, every second motive that you admit, is equally small and pitiful. If you were to propose to yourself to obtain the love or the admiration of the whole world, to have your name like those "of the mighty men of old, men of renown," or even the approval of the blessed saints and angels themselves, and were to work for the sake of them only, it would be a second motive, and although it might seem a nobler aim, it would in reality be altogether as unworthy of you, as if you had laid out your whole life for the sole sake of pleasing Mrs. Ormsby."

"Mrs. Ormsby and all the family are hateful and detestable, they are too insolent to live," I rejoined, impetuously.

"Now, my dear, I am not going to preach to you in my own words, because that might affront you, but I will read to you out of a little book, that has been my counsel and comfort in many perplexities and troubles; I think I can find something very much to the purpose."

She put on her spectacles, the dear old woman, and slowly read the following sentences:—

"'We cannot trust much to ourselves, because we often want grace and understanding.'

"'There is but little light in us, and this we quickly lose through negligence.'

"'We often do ill, and do worse in excusing it.'

"'We are sometimes moved with passion, and we mistake it for zeal. We blame great things in others, and pass over great things ourselves. We are quick enough at perceiving, and weighing what we suffer from others, but we mind not what others suffer from us. He that would well and duly weigh his own deeds, would have no room to judge hard of others.'"

"Read me some more," said I, as she paused, "I like to hear it."

"With all my heart, dear; the children are in bed, and I have some time before me. I would be glad if this little book were ever made the comfort to you that it has been to me. I will go on where I was reading myself when you called me."

She snuffed her candle and turned over the leaves, and then began to read a chapter called "The King's Highway to the Holy Cross." It was very beautiful, and awoke a better spirit in my heart, though I was far from knowing or understanding all the wisdom and spirituality of it at that time ; indeed, the longer I live, the more there seems yet to be learned about it.

"What book is that, nurse? and who wrote it?"

"It is called the 'Imitation of Christ,' by Thomas à Kempis. It is now known to have been written by the good man whose name it bears ; but it was formerly ascribed to a great and learned man named Jean Gerson, who lived more than four hundred years ago, in France, in a time of great trouble, war, and famine, and when the whole Christian world was torn with disputes and bitter divisions ; and Jean Gerson, who was the Chancellor, published this little book, to shew people the spirit in which they ought to live and believe. I read a life of him once ; he spent all his fortune and revenues in building schools and asylums for the poor children who, fatherless and motherless, wandered about the streets of the city of Paris, dying of hunger, and with no one to relieve them, for the distress was terrible ; he had them gathered together by hundreds ; he did good to all as far

as he could, but it was the poor little children who most moved his compassion. He was a brave and fearless man, and did not fear to speak the truth to the Queen and all the nobles of the Court. He did a great deal of good, but I think the best thing he ever did, was to publish this book, for it has lived after him, and is a comfort to all who read it, not depending on who may have been the author."

It is very strange how books, people, and friends, even what seem to be accidental events, are drifted to us exactly at the right moment when we most need them—they come like the fruits of the earth in their due season. It depends upon ourselves alone to discern them, and attract them to us. I have remarked this through the whole course of my own life, and if it has been true for me, it is true for others also.

From this night, I had a dear and valuable friend in the old nurse. She was not an educated woman, but she had strong, good sense, and was thoroughly and deeply religious. She had a singular wisdom and insight into human nature, which, combined with her prudent and consistent conduct, made her a remarkable woman. She had great strength of character, which tells more than talent, and very fortunate it was for me that I came in contact with her.

The outward circumstances of my life continued



to be much the same as they had been since my entrance into the family ; but the bitterness was in a great measure taken out of them. I was relieved from the necessity of asserting my position, and that took an immense strain off my life ; for although I formerly tried, I could never succeed, which made it very fatiguing. I was relieved, too, from all concern with Mrs. Ormsby or her daughters. I had nothing to do but my own duty, which seemed to become much easier after I left off burdening myself with the faults of others.

Of course I sometimes fell back into my old, dreary state, but it was never hopeless. I felt that I held a clue to get out of it, and that the dark mood would pass away.

## CHAPTER XIV.

As I have said, for the next six months my life continued to be outwardly the same as it had formerly been ; but I had obtained a faint glimmering of a blessed, inner life, which made me do everything in quite another spirit. Words that my mother had spoken years ago, which at the time I scarcely understood, seemed brought to my remembrance with a freshness and meaning as if some spirit whispered them to me. One day—or, rather, one evening—I was sitting with nurse ; the children were in bed, and we were busy sewing.

“Nurse,” said I, after a silence, “I have been thinking of something, and I wish you would give me your advice about it.”

“Gladly, my dear child, as well as I am able.”

“Well, I am here without receiving any salary, and I want to know whether it would be wrong in me to ask Mrs. Ormsby to pay me. I do as much work as any of the servants ;—or, if she should refuse, might I not look out for another situation, where I might earn some money ? You

see I am growing quite old ;—I shall be eighteen my next birthday.”

“Yes, you are becoming quite an old woman,” said nurse, smiling. “I think, however, that you are, as you say, quite worth a salary ; and if Mrs. Ormsby does not mention it of her own accord, I think you might do well to speak of it to her. May-be she does not think how the time passes on, and that you are doing so much more than you could when you first came.”

“When I came first, it was settled that I was to be paid nothing ; but if I never am to have money for what I do, how am I to live all my life ?”

I asked this question with a gravity that set nurse laughing.

“Of course, my child, you are only requiring what is quite just ; but you must be prudent in the manner you go about this business. In case Mrs. Ormsby refuses, you must not rashly throw yourself out of this place. Have you any friends or home to go to ?”

“No one but my aunt, who could not afford to keep me ; and I have only eighteen-pence in money in the world, so I could not travel to her.”

“Well then, my dear, you must be all the more cautious. This place you are in is dull enough and hard enough ; but for a young girl in

your friendless and exposed condition, it is better than most you could meet with, if only Mrs. Ormsby will give you a moderate salary."

"Oh, dear nurse!" said I, dolefully; "am I never to hope to go to a better place? I am sure I thought I was very contented; only when you speak of this being a good place for me, and seemed to think I must stay here, it sent quite a chill to my heart. Perhaps I have not been sincere, after all, in trying to be contented!"

"I am an old woman, my dear, and know what the world is, and all the dangers to which you would be exposed, pretty and poor as you are,—neither a lady nor a servant,—and without any friends to protect you."

"But I do not feel afraid," said I; "and if I could but earn some money, I think I should enjoy meeting with difficulties. I should like to go out into the world, and make my way."

"You do not know what you are talking about, Miss Clarissa. We are all of us vain, weak creatures; we none of us know what we would do until we are tried. We ought never to feel too confident,—it is the beginning of all mischief. 'Hold Thou my feet, O God, that my footsteps slip not.'"

"Then am I doing wrong in moving in this matter? I will be quiet, if you think I ought."

“No, dear; I think you are quite right in making up your mind to speak to Mrs. Ormsby; but hold yourself patient, in case you should be disappointed; be tranquil, whatever comes, quite sure that your affairs are committed to One who will order things for you far better than you could even wish them for yourself; and so long as you desire sincerely to conform your own will to the will of Him that is ‘Higher than the Highest,’ all things—even those that seem most contrary—will work together for your good.”

“Well, nurse, I may feel—I cannot help it—that I wish for one thing or another,—quick, vehement wishes, as if I were hungry for them; but I hope—I think—that at the bottom of my heart my real and strong desire is this: to take His will for mine in small things as in great, because I *know* that it will be surely *well* with those who can make themselves one with it. Oh, you do not know the comfort and rest it is to feel in my heart that I can, that I do, desire not to choose for myself, but that He should dispense to me my portion in this life. I cannot always feel it so vividly as at this moment, but I think—I hope it is always there, though it is often dashed over by quick, passionate waves, like my fear, just now, that I should be always left to live here.”

“Hold fast that desire, my child,—cling to it and believe in it, even in moments of darkness; when you are tossed by the storm of your own self-will, and tempted by vain desires, it shall be ‘as the anchor of your soul, sure and steadfast.’ If you have indeed this experience, my child, you have received a great blessing. The beginning and the end of all religion, so far as I know, is to be enabled to take His will as the best and highest, no matter how hard or cruel-looking it may be; as Job said in his great affliction, so ought we to feel: ‘though He slay me, yet will I *trust* in Him.’ You are young yet, my child, but happy is it for you, if thus at the beginning of your life’s journey, you have had this sure ‘rod and staff’ given to support you. And now, let us go to bed, and leave till to-morrow the evil or the good thereof. God bless you, my darling child.”

She kissed me as if she had been my mother, and we each went to our room without speaking more.

I think I never saw any one look more astonished than Mrs. Ormsby the next morning, when I made my modest request. She declared, with a conscientious air, that she owed it to herself to keep rigidly to her engagements; the agreement with my aunt was, that I was to receive no salary, and Mrs. Ormsby declared that it was

quite impossible she could break her word ; she intimated that I was at liberty to look out for any other situation, and dismissed me with a stately bend of her head.

I heartily wished I had never moved in the matter, not that I thought Mrs. Ormsby was right or just, but I felt so helpless.

Time passed on, and Mrs. Ormsby appeared to have forgotten my audacity, when one morning I received a letter written in a strange hand. It was from the mistress of the house where my aunt lived, and was to say that she was dangerously ill, and to desire me to go to her without delay.

I took the letter in my hand to Mrs. Ormsby, who was just then engaged in legislating for the arrangements entailed by a house full of visitors, who were to arrive that very day. My recall certainly occurred at precisely the wrong moment, but Mrs. Ormsby was far too grand to allow me to feel myself of the least importance ; she begged that she might not be interrupted for such a trifle, I was quite at liberty to go whenever I chose. However, she generously presented me with two old dresses, and a pair of boots, which, having belonged to one of the children, were impossibly small for me, after which, it was no further concern of hers what became of me.

Nurse lent me money to pay my coach fare, and made arrangements for me to reach Ballyraggan Gap in time to meet the mail. If it had not been for her kindness, I do not know how I should ever have got back to Dublin.



## CHAPTER XV.

I FOUND my aunt ill, very ill indeed, and my presence much needed, for she had no one to nurse her, and she required constant care. I think I must have a natural vocation for nursing sick people. I feel so much more interest in them when they are ill, than when they are well.

For a few days it seemed doubtful how my aunt's illness would terminate ; but at length, she began to manifest symptoms of improvement. During her convalescence, she was very peevish and irritable ; her sole topic of complaint, the one great grievance of her destiny, on which she murmured from morning till night, was the abominable indifference and neglect with which her uncle, Sir Tiberius, had treated her. Her illness had been formally announced to him, but he had taken no notice of the letter.

My aunt would rather have enjoyed grumbling, if the subject had been less touching.

At last, one day as I was sitting alone in

the parlour, a jaunting-car drove up the gravel-walk, and after a parley in the lobby, Norah threw open the parlour-door, saying,—

“A gentleman enquiring for you, miss.”

I looked up, and saw a tall, elderly, farmer-like looking man, whose grey hair, parted in front, and falling in long, natural locks upon his shoulders, gave a certain picturesque air to his features, otherwise harsh and coarse; he was dressed in a long skirted blue coat, with bright gilt buttons, and wore yellow topped boots. His appearance was that of a substantial farmer; he looked at me in some surprise, and said,—

“I was told I should find my niece, Miss Donnelly here, there seems some mistake!”

“I replied that my aunt was up stairs, and would come down presently.”

“And who may you be?” said the stranger.

“I am Clarissa Donnelly, and Miss Donnelly is my aunt.”

“Then I have the pleasure of being your great-uncle, and proud I am of such a beauty belonging to our family. I am Sir Tiberius Donnelly, you may, perhaps, have heard of me!”

He claimed the privilege of an uncle, and saluted me as gallantly as though he had been the Lord-Lieutenant; but he did not exactly

realise the idea I had formed of my uncle, the baronet.

My aunt was restored to her peace of mind by the arrival of her uncle, who, owing to country roads, cross posts, and Irish management, had only received the tidings of her illness a few days previously. Unless private business had brought him to Dublin, I doubt whether any emergency of my aunt would have induced him to leave home, but being come, he behaved very kindly, and insisted that both my aunt and myself should return, and take up our permanent abode with him.

My aunt asked for nothing better; indeed, this proposal realised her highest aspirations; but for me the case was very different, and I felt no disposition to fill the post of a poor relation. I did not know what I was competent for, nor had I the least notion where to look for a situation, but the idea of being independent, and going out into the world to earn my living, had become fixed in my mind.

The bright idea struck me, that I would write to Miss Elizabeth Parry, my old school-mistress. I had written to her once or twice just after leaving her, but the correspondence had languished, not from any diminution of regard, but partly because we did not love letter-writing, and partly because in those days letters were

costly. I had not heard of her for several years, but I felt confident, that if she were alive she would assist me.

I wrote my letter, and committed it to the post, with many misgivings, lest amongst the thousand other letters, mine should be lost or mis-sent, a very natural anxiety, when it is a letter that lies near one's heart.

The answer had not long to be waited for; almost before I had begun to hope, I received a kind, cordial invitation from Miss Elizabeth, to go over on a visit, and enclosed was a five-pound note, to pay my expenses. I do not believe any girl in the world ever met with so many friends as I have done, and all coming to me at the right moment. I am sure it has not been from any deservings of my own. I jumped for joy when I received this precious letter, but I had a great battle with my aunt before I could obtain her consent to avail myself of the invitation; my uncle, too, opposed it; and from being most polite and flattering, he became quite rude and disagreeable; shewing how very tyrannical he could be if he had the opportunity.

He declared it was a mark of the low blood in me, to wish to go out for the sake of getting money, when my own relations were willing to take me amongst them, and keep me like a lady, for the credit of the family. But this only made

me feel more determined that nothing should induce me to be dependent. Within the last few months, I had, from a thoughtless girl, become a woman, and I felt quite sure that I was doing right, and not acting from obstinacy. My aunt at last gave a grumbling consent, and I was allowed to depart under the escort of an English lady and her brother, who were returning to London.

Mrs. Roberts and her brother, Mr. Fenton, were acquaintances I had accidentally made during my aunt's illness. They had been my fellow travellers from Ballyraggan Gap; they knew some friends of ours in Dublin, and the casual acquaintance had been formally renewed. Mrs. Roberts was a quiet, timid, and somewhat formal woman, easily startled, and apt to dislike anything that looked singular or sudden, but as good and kind-hearted as it was possible to be, otherwise I am sure she could not have shewn so much good-nature and tolerance towards me, who, at that time, had a scrambling, Irish-stylishness about me, very different from the delicate quietness of her own manners. Her brother was very handsome. Some years older than his sister, he could scarcely be called a young man; but that arose, not so much from his years, as from a certain manner as if he had long been the head of a family, and was accus-

tomed to be looked up to and relied upon. I was rather afraid of him, I confess, though he was extremely kind to me ; but I felt as if both he and his sister must disapprove of me for being so different to them.

When we reached London, Mrs. Roberts invited me to stay with her for a few days. She lived in a nice house in Russell Square, and had everything very handsome and comfortable about her. Mr. Roberts, her husband, was a merchant in the city,—he seconded his wife's invitation ; but Mrs. Parry was expecting me, and I was anxious to reach my journey's end ; so I steadily refused to prolong my visit, and I fancied that Mr. Fenton looked as if he approved of me, which made me feel quite sure I was doing right. That very afternoon I took my place in the stage-coach that passed the garden-gate of Mrs. Parry, and arrived there in the evening without any sort of adventure.

Nothing could be kinder than my reception by both Mrs. Parry and her daughter. I might have been a child of their own come back to them, and I felt as if I had not been absent from them a day

I told them, of course, all my history since I had left them, and they both approved of my determination to depend on my own exertions.

I cannot express the comfort and happiness

it was to be once more under an orderly, English roof; nor the luxurious freshness and cleanliness of the little bed-room, with its white dimity curtains; it was a positive sense of pleasure to see that the jug and basin were of the same pattern, and neither of them broken!

The next morning, after breakfast, Miss Elizabeth said,—

“Now, Clarissa, let us see what sort of situation you are fitted for. A governess, in these days, is expected to be able to teach everything.”

The examination began in the ordinary branches of school knowledge; but I am sorry to say that I knew even less than when I left school. Whether my aunt had been to blame for not teaching me well, or whether the fault had been mine for not taking pains to improve myself, there was no use in enquiring; the mortifying fact remained, that I was a remarkably ill-informed young woman.

Miss Elizabeth, who had pursued her enquiries with professional coolness and keenness, looked neither surprised nor annoyed at the result; she took it in the most matter-of-fact manner imaginable.

“Well, Clarissa,” said she, at the conclusion, “what is your own opinion of yourself? Do you feel yourself competent to be a governess, and to superintend the education of young people?

Colonel Mortlock has written to me to recommend a governess for his children, girls of twelve and thirteen years of age. I had thought of you; but, judging yourself candidly, do you feel competent to undertake the task?"

"No, Miss Elizabeth, indeed I do not. I am a very ignorant girl, and I had no notion how little I knew. I must begin to earn my own living at once, and there is now no time for me to go to school and learn, even if I could afford it."

"I do not know the ideas with which your aunt has brought you up. She perhaps expected that your grand-uncle, Sir Tiberius, would give you a fortune."

"I would rather work for myself, if I only knew how, than be dependent on any one. If I could only earn money enough to feel quite sure of living, I should be contented; indeed I should be quite proud, if I could do anything well enough to deserve being paid for it."

"That is all very well to say, and if you are in earnest, I dare say we shall be able to find you something. Now, listen. You are perhaps competent to teach very young children; you might make a good nursery governess, in which case you might continue to think yourself a young lady; you would earn considerably less than the lady's-maid, less even, perhaps, than the nurse;



but then you are aware that it is considered much more genteel,—indeed, that it is quite a different thing to be a governess, than either a nurse or a lady's-maid. To be sure, mothers are apt to eke out the labours of a nursery governess, by requiring her to take charge of the children's wardrobe; but still she is a governess,—a lady by courtesy, and eligible, on occasion, to sit at the dinner-table, or to be admitted to the drawing-room, if she be pretty and well-mannered. She cannot be required, as the phrase is, 'to do anything menial,' beyond 'making herself generally useful,'—and she receives 'a salary,' instead of wages. Now if, for the sake of your gentility, and to keep your caste, you choose to have a situation of this kind, I will look out for one. What do you say?"

"But what else is there that I can do? What other position lies open to me, except to be a companion to young ladies, as I was at Mrs Ormsby's? I did not like it, and was not paid either."

I spoke very ruefully, for I felt ready to cry with disgust at the prospect Miss Elizabeth held out to me, and I was provoked at her cold, half sarcastic manner.

"I will tell you what I should do if I were in your position; but of course I cannot judge for you; the same things strike people so differently."

"I only wish to know what is right,—what is the most advisable," interrupted I, rather pettishly, "and I am sure I am ready to do it."

"Well," continued she, with provoking calmness, "if my education had fallen into arrears, I would look out for some situation where education was not the chief thing needed; where whatever good principle, or good sense, or ability, I might have, would be called into action, and where I should feel fully competent to discharge all the duties I might undertake. I can fancy no condition more painful or more degrading than when we profess more than we can perform. If you are only a shoe-black, do your work thoroughly, or seek some still more humble occupation, to which you may be equal. The only disgrace I know in the world is, to prove inefficient or incompetent to what you undertake. As a governess, I am afraid you would be perfectly worthless; but you have qualities which would render you valuable in another position. A friend of mine—a lady who has been an invalid from her youth—has just been deprived of the maid who has waited upon her for several years; it is a situation that would require great kindness, and patience, and integrity. Although I have a very slight opinion of your learning, I have a respect for other qualities you possess; and if you can make up your mind to come down

from your conventional position, and honestly accept this place of lady's maid, I will recommend you, and I have no doubt of obtaining it."

"What sort of person is the lady?"

"A thorough gentlewoman. There are hundreds who would jump at the chance of being her 'companion;' but she has a prejudice against that position which, she says, is neither one thing nor the other, and whoever she engages must lay their account to being a lady's-maid, and nothing more. If you go, it must not be as a reduced gentlewoman, with fine feelings, and finding hardship in your ordinary duties. It may be all very well for you to recollect that you are a young lady, and have an uncle a baronet, but you must not expect any one else to remember it. If you go to Miss Airlie, you go as her domestic servant, and take rank as such. We will not talk any more now. Give me your answer to night."

I did consider; and at night, after tea, I told Miss Elizabeth, that if she could obtain the situation for me, I would be very glad to accept it. Dear, good Mrs. Parry, began to praise me for my resolution and good sense, but Miss Elizabeth took it quite as a matter of course, and only said,—

"Well, then, we must have you instructed in the art of clear-starching, for you will have to

get up all Miss Airlie's lace and fine muslin, about which she is very particular, and indeed they are curiosities of costliness—they are her only extravagance. To-morrow, after breakfast, we will go and apply for the place."

I was not prepared for such a sudden plunge, and felt rather dismayed, but I said nothing. The next morning, at ten o'clock, a chaise was at the door, to take us to Airlie Park, about five miles off. It was a handsome, substantial mansion, amidst fine old timber, and the entrance was up an avenue of elms and chesnut-trees. Everything was in good order and handsomely kept up.

When we alighted Miss Elizabeth enquired for Miss Airlie, and bidding me sit down in the hall, she followed the respectable, but somewhat supercilious, butler up-stairs.

The colour mounted to my forehead, and I felt bitterly pained at what I considered the needlessly insulting conduct of Miss Elizabeth. The fact was, that although I had made up my mind to accept this situation, I had unconsciously regarded it as an exceptional one; the idea that the lady was an invalid had disguised the reality—to attend upon an invalid and be kind to her, was not nearly so trying to my pride as it would have been to be the maid of a fine lady of fashion. Besides, I regarded myself (although unconsciously) as a heroine in distress, and although I pro-

fessed myself quite willing to do anything I was required, yet there had been all along, a mental reservation that my condescension would be recognised, and that I should never be treated as anything less than a young lady, although I claimed nothing. Miss Elizabeth's abrupt mode of shewing me my true position, by leaving me to wait in the hall whilst she went to speak to my future mistress, dispelled all my self-delusions at the very moment I became conscious of them, and a bitter consciousness it was. It is true that on arriving at Mrs. Ormsby's, I had been left in the servants' hall, and compelled to live in the nursery, but still I had the comfort of feeling ill-treated, and the privilege of being proudly indignant; but here there was no ill-treatment or hardship in the case. I was a servant come to apply for a situation, and I was only in my proper place: this was the real bitterness, and for some minutes I wished that I had accepted my uncle's proposal, and gone to live with him; and I pictured to myself all that he and my aunt would say, could they have seen me as I then was. I shed bitter tears of vexation and annoyance—all the romance was taken out of the idea of being independent and earning my own living. After a time, however, better thoughts arose, and I felt ashamed of the deceitfulness I had exercised towards myself.

"To take His will for the best and wisest, however hard or cruel-looking;" and it flashed upon me as these words came into my mind, that here, lying close at hand, was the practical meaning of what had sounded so noble and eloquent as a maxim. To come and be a servant was a most ordinary, matter-of-fact proceeding, but that I should

———"Subdue me to my Father's will;"

that I should accept heartily the lot He had appointed, and do my duty therein with all my might; that I should do it not in bitterness, but in a spirit of love and obedience.—"She hath done what she could," seemed as if it had been whispered in my ear; and no place was left except for a feeling of gratitude.

All the common, little, daily duties of my position seemed to be inspired by a noble meaning, and to have a secret life hidden within them. No place was left except for a feeling of gratitude, almost of awe, to think that I was allowed to lead my poor little insignificant life from such a noble motive; henceforth, what did it matter what acts were to be done, whether it were to be curling the hair of a lady of fashion, waiting upon a sick mistress, blacking shoes, or scouring the floor, if it were the duty of the hour?—All was transformed into a service of love.

There are moments which contain the germ of

our whole life, wherein we obtain a knowledge and insight; on the strength of which "we journey many days."

I was so much absorbed that I had forgotten everything, and was only recalled to myself by hearing the old butler say, with a slight emphasis of impatience,—

"Miss Airlie desires you will go up stairs to her; you seem to be either deaf or dozing, for I have said the same thing three times before you heard me; you must learn to be sharper than that if you come here."

"I am sure I beg your pardon," said I, as the old man, with a very crabbed grace, ushered me up stairs. He was very formal and old fashioned in his notions, and augured no good from my appearance. He threw open the door of a large sitting-room. A lady lay upon a couch by the window, and Miss Elizabeth was sitting beside her.

This is the young person I mentioned to you," said Miss Elizabeth; "come forwards, Clarissa, and speak to Miss Airlie!"

I advanced from the door where I had hesitated. Miss Airlie fixed her large, mild blue eyes upon me, and said,—

"Miss Parry has told me that you wish for my situation; do you think you can undertake it?"

I replied, that I should be very glad to try.

"Ah! well, then, I dare say you will succeed. I think I should like to have you; you will soon get into the way of all you will have to do. As to wages, I gave my last maid twenty pounds a year. I shall like you to be always nicely dressed. I am particular on that point; for the rest, if you are as well disposed as you look, I am sure we shall agree very well."

She turned to Miss Elizabeth, and said, in a lower voice,—

"Do you think your *protégée* would object to being called by some name more simple than Clarissa? it is very romantic, and I have a great prejudice against persons with fine names."

"I am sure Clarissa will have too much sense to make any objection," said Miss Elizabeth, gravely.

I felt very much inclined to laugh, but I answered that I was quite willing to accept any name they chose, and suggested that I should be called Donnelly.

"No; I think I would rather call you Mary, it is a name to which I am accustomed; my last maid was named Mary, and I was much attached to her; she lived with me twelve years, and then found it in her heart to marry and leave me. When can you come?"

"She can come whenever you please," said



Miss Elizabeth, rising to depart; "but I intended to have had her instructed in the mystery of washing lace."

"Oh, never mind all that! let her remain now she is here, and her clothes can come by the carrier."

I had expected at least a few days to prepare myself for my change of life, and was startled at the suddenness of the arrangement; but Miss Elizabeth said,—

"Well then, Clarissa, good-bye, and mind you are a good girl, and do credit to my recommendation."

"You can take your bonnet off in the next room," said my mistress, with an inclination of her head, which gave me to understand that I was dismissed. I shook hands with Miss Elizabeth, with great difficulty keeping back the tears that started to my eyes, and left the room, thankful to be alone for a few minutes.

## CHAPTER XVI.

IN looking back upon our life, I do not know whether we have cause to be the most struck with our escape from the things we most desired, or the benefits we have found strangely concealed in the events we most dreaded. Certainly I have had great reason myself, to feel thankful that my way has been appointed for me, and that I have not been allowed to choose my own lot.

But to proceed with my story, which will soon be concluded, as I have very few further changes to relate. This period was the commencement of the permanent settling down of my life and character.

I soon became quite at home in my new position. I do not know that it is wise to talk much about happiness, but the nearest approach to it that I can imagine, is to have work suited to our capacity, and to arise every morning with the definite duties of the day marked out before us, without questioning or seeking. I am convinced that half the unhappiness in life arises from an unacknowledged, obscure sense of re-

morse, for time left waste, and faculties unemployed, thereby tormenting their possessors, by their blind, restless, ineffectual stirrings, producing a vague feeling of undischarged responsibility lying heavily upon the soul, and depressing it far more than the ordinary amount of actual sorrow and calamity which falls to everybody's lot in life.

To have regular employment, that must be performed whether we like it or not, may sound like a hardship, but it keeps at bay all manner of unhappiness. This is my own experience, and I am convinced it is not merely personal.

My duties as Miss Airlie's maid were not heavy, but the strictest punctuality and attention were required to discharge them properly. I soon became rather skilful in getting up lace and fine muslin, and my mistress declared she had never had them done so much to her mind; I had the entire care of her wardrobe, which necessitated habits of neatness and exactness, to which I had long been accustomed.

I was not expected to mix with the other domestics, all my meals being served to me in a small room communicating with Miss Airlie's apartment, where I was accustomed to sit when she did not require my presence; this was not conceded as a privilege, but was the natural arrangement she had established.

At first, indeed, whether it was that I seemed to have a touch of being above my place, or whether my mistress wished to make me definitely understand that I was a lady's-maid, and not an anomalous "companion," I do not know, but although as kind and gentle as possible, I could make no mistake about my position. At first I was unconsciously disappointed at this dry line of demarcation; I had hoped and expected I scarcely know what, of solace and recognition, but after a little time, I accepted my position in all its reality, and frankly abandoned the last shadow of self assertion; henceforth all the difficulties of my life were at an end. The strain and the friction were removed, and I worked smoothly and easily in the place allotted to me.

Before six months had elapsed I had become passionately attached to my mistress, who was a woman well calculated to excite an enthusiasm in a young girl like myself. It was the strongest sentiment I had ever known, except my love for my mother; but this had a romantic emotion, quite different to the other. Certainly I never met with a woman like her. She had the faculty of taking, as it were, possession of one, and exciting an intense sympathy and affection in all on whom she chose to exercise her power. I never knew any one who so thoroughly appre-

ciated affection, nor who had such a keen insight into all that was false and affected. Her good sense almost amounted to genius, and I think sometimes that must have been the secret of her ascendancy. She was no longer either young or handsome—she must have been more than forty years old—but she had still the remains of a noble countenance, bearing that indescribable and touching beauty of long-continued bodily suffering nobly borne, when the element of pain seems to have spiritualized and purified the whole being. Outwardly her lot had been prosperous. Of a high family, and heiress to an ample fortune, she had been wrapped round with luxury, and fenced with immunities from all the tangible or hard realities of life. An accident in early childhood had rendered her slightly deformed, and resulted in permanent ill health. She had been passionately attached to a cousin about her own age; but her father forbade the engagement on account of her state of health. The young man went abroad with his regiment to India, and was killed in an attack upon some mud-fort, belonging to one of the native Rajahs.

From that time Miss Airlie gave up all thoughts of worldly happiness; her health became much worse, and she was for many years entirely confined to her couch. The traces of the struggling of that period were still visible. Her heart was

filled with unknown treasures of affection, and it was a bitter trial to have all her capacity for deep and enduring attachment thrown back upon herself, and to be condemned to live a helpless, dependent invalid, with no hope of ever moving beyond her own apartment. It was not without a long and painful exercise of mind, that she was enabled to accept her lot, and subdue herself to the will of Him who appointed it. But she did submit, and her reward was that no bitterness or repining, nor any evil feeling had the power to destroy her peace. In the power of renunciation, in the strength which was given her to put aside all vain hopes, she found a hidden life, of which she had not dreamed. She once said to me, "I would not now part with one sorrow, or one trial I have had." Certainly she had been perfected through suffering; and to see her, as I did, day by day, opened to me an idea of something much higher and nobler than a life of happiness.

She often suffered paroxysms of severe bodily pain; in fact, I do not suppose she ever knew what it was to be entirely free from it. This had for me a certain attraction. I felt an intense sympathy for her, as for one dwelling in a mysterious world altogether unknown to me.

She became to me the type of a superior being, and all my services were so many modes of expressing my hero worship. I believe if she

had told me that putting my hand into the fire would have given her one moment's ease or comfort, I should have done so joyfully.

Another tie rose between us, and that perfected our relation.

I was standing at a table, arranging some flowers in a vase. She lay upon a couch at a little distance, watching me attentively.

"You remind me of a friend I once loved very much," said she at length.

"I have been often told that I resemble my mother," replied I.

"Your mother?" said she, quickly; "who was she?—where is she?"

"She has been dead many years. Her maiden name was Morley."

"Gertrude Morley!—from Dunnington?"

"Yes," replied I, with some surprise at the sudden emotion she exhibited.

"She was my earliest friend. We were at school together; and when I became an invalid, I begged my father to let her come and live with me as a companion. She came to us upon a visit; but before any arrangement was spoken of, she rashly ran away with a young man who was visiting here. I have not heard of her since. She never wrote to me, or gave me a trace how to discover her. And you are her child?"

"My mother sometimes spoke of an early friend, in whose house she met my father. But she did write to you, and her letter was returned, —not by you, but by your father."

"Come here and let me look at you, to be quite sure that you are Gertrude Morley's child! I could not tell why I felt so drawn to you the first day I saw you."

I went and knelt down beside her couch, and whilst she held my hands, looking earnestly into my face, I told her all my mother's history, as she had related it; and about her death, and all that had befallen me since.

"I loved your mother, Clarissa," said Miss Airlie, wiping away her tears, "and I must have loved you for her sake, even if I had not loved you for your own. Do not think, dear child, that because I have not spoken, I have been unmindful or indifferent to all your labour of love. Henceforth you belong to me, and must never leave me until you marry."

"And that will never be!" said I, vehemently. "I only wish to live and die with you, and to use my life to make yours easier."

"My good Clarissa," said she, kissing my cheek, and smoothing my head, "you do not know what you say. We will live together as long as we may; and you are a great blessing to me, and have been ever since you came. But



we do not know what is appointed for us. We must not hold each other too fast, lest evil befall us. Your mother must have taught you well; I can see her influence in all you do."

I cannot express the pleasure this gave me; to be told I was like what she would have wished me to be, was the very highest reward I could have received.

This discovery made no ostensible difference in my position. I continued to discharge all my duties as before; indeed, I was much too jealously attached to Miss Airlie, to have suffered another human being to have infringed upon my office. But gradually I became to her like a younger sister. During the time I had lived with her, my mind had become a good deal cultivated, from the habit of reading aloud to her; and the influence of her refinement and perfect breeding had taken its effect on me, so that there was nothing abrupt or unnatural in the transition. She continued, in all things, to be my natural and lawful superior, and I yielded an instinctive and ready obedience. I was amused, but very much pleased, by the testimony the old butler paid to me one day.

"Well, I will have hopes of everybody now, for I never saw a mortal woman so much improved. The first day you came, I said to myself, that young lass is too fantastic for *this*

house ; but I am bound to say that you have become as well-behaved and inoffensive a young woman as I would desire to see,—and that is my candid opinion of you.”

I laughed, and thanked him. It requires a certain amount of excellence even to be inoffensive.

Seven years passed away, and I had no other idea but of living and dying in Miss Airlie's service.

During the last year, she had begun to enjoy a larger measure of health, and was even able to drive round the park in a little pony phaeton. No event deserving of particular record occurs to my recollection, unless it be the incident of receiving an offer of marriage from a young surgeon, who, having only seen me at church, fancied himself dreadfully in love with me. Another proposal came from a rich young grazier, whose only acquaintance with me was under the same circumstances ; but as I did not accept either of them, they can scarcely be called events.

At last, however, an event did really occur which entirely disturbed the tranquil tenor of our life.

The physician from whose prescriptions Miss Airlie had derived so much benefit, desired that she should come up to London for a few months,

that he might be able to see her every day, to watch the effect of a new method of treatment.

Accordingly we made our preparations, and travelling very gently, in order not to tax Miss Airlie's strength, we at length found ourselves safely installed in a pleasant house at Brompton.

## CHAPTER XVII.

MISS AIRLIE continued to benefit by the treatment and the change of air, and in the course of of a few weeks, was in better health than she had known for many years.

She insisted that I should go about a little, and see something of London. An old lady of her acquaintance was extremely good-natured, and often took me with her when she went her drives.

One morning we were doing some shopping, in Regent Street, when my companion spoke to a lady, whom I at once recognised as Mrs. Roberts, who had brought me over from Ireland. The recognition was mutual, and she cordially invited me to dine with her the next day, offering to send her carriage for me. I felt rather embarrassed, as she was evidently unaware of my situation; but the old lady, my companion, thinking my hesitation arose from unwillingness to leave Miss Airlie alone, answered for me at once, and as I thought that if Miss Airlie did not approve of it, I could

easily write a note, I was silent. Miss Airlie was, however, quite pleased with the occurrence, and said I should go by all means.

Mrs. Roberts' brougham came for me at the time appointed, and a very pleasant day I spent.

Mr. Fenton was staying with his sister, and I thought that he looked rather surprised to see me again. There were no other visitors beside myself. After dinner Mrs. Roberts told me a great deal about her brother; I hardly know how it was we came to speak of him, but she seemed to like talking about him to any one who would listen. All she told me gave me a high respect for him, indeed, I hardly think there ever was so good a man.

Old Mr. Fenton, the father, had been a ribbon manufacturer in Coventry, and was supposed to be rich. The eldest son, Edward, was sent to college, to be educated for a profession. The father died suddenly; his affairs were found to be embarrassed, in consequence of speculations foreign to his business. A friend offered to continue Edward at college, but his mother and four younger brothers and sisters were unprovided for.

Edward refused the offer, returned home, and carried on his father's business under inspection, until the concern was clear. He continued to prosper; his sisters married well, and he edu-

cated his two brothers, one to succeed him in the concern, and the other he sent to college, to work out the career he had once desired for himself. He was now making arrangements to retire on a handsome competency, and might now, as Mrs. Roberts said, "find time to think of being married himself." I told all this to Miss Airlie on my return, and it appeared to interest her, for she asked me many questions about Mr. Fenton.

After that day I went frequently to see Mrs. Roberts, and Miss Airlie always liked me to go there. She took me about a great deal, and Mr. Fenton generally accompanied us.

One day Mr. Fenton said he would walk home with me. I did not like that he should take so much trouble, for it was a long distance to where we resided; but Mrs. Roberts, to whom I stated my scruples, as I was putting on my bonnet, entirely overruled them, and bid me not to be fantastic.

Accordingly we set off. I found nothing to say, and Mr. Fenton was equally silent. I was quite vexed to be so stupid, and began to fear he would repent of his good nature. I ventured to look up at him, but he was looking at me, and I felt quite foolish and disconcerted. He tightened his grasp of the arm that was leaning upon him; my heart beat too much for

me to hear distinctly all he said; but I understood that he cared for me more than any other woman in the world, and wished to marry me.

It was such a surprise to hear all this from a man to whom I had looked up, as to a superior being, that I could scarcely believe in its reality. My first feeling was a deep gladness, but the next moment I saw that he did not know my position in life. It was very bitter to see, that what would have been such happiness, might be taken away in a moment. I could not have spoken a word; but I began to cry, and then I heard him beg me to take time to consider, and to give him some hope, for he seemed to fear he had displeased me. I could not bear him to think so, and I said, rather vehemently,—

“No, no, it is of no use to consider; I cannot accept you; if you knew who I am, you would not have spoken as you have done.”

“What do you wish me to understand, Miss Donnelly?” he asked, in a surprised and rather offended tone.

“I mean, that you fancy me a young lady, and your equal; but I am only Miss Airlie’s servant,—I am her lady’s-maid,—though she has been my friend, and I love her more than anybody else in the world.”

“I did not enquire the capacity in which you

lived with Miss Airlie, though, if ever I thought about it, I fancied you her relation; but that has nothing to do with the matter, my affection is not built upon your position in life. When I met you at my sister's, I scarcely recognised the young Irish girl we had brought over, in the matured and cultivated woman before me. Wherever you may have spent the intervening time, you have used it nobly. Sometimes I have felt tempted to repine, that my responsibilities towards my own family hindered me from daring to form ties for myself, but since knowing you, I have rejoiced that my path has been so hedged up on either side, that having found you, I am free to love you with all my heart. I will not give up the hope of winning you for my wife, until you have taken time to consider, until," added he, smiling, "you have consulted Miss Airlie."

I do not know what I replied, or whether I said anything, but the instant the door was open I darted in and rushed to Miss Airlie's room.

"Mary! Clarissa! my dear child! what has happened to you?" cried she, in alarm.

I went and knelt down beside her couch, and told her all that had passed, but I felt as if I had been the most ungrateful, hard-hearted creature in the world, to have desired to leave her for a single moment, and I concluded by declaring



that I would write to Mr. Fenton, and beg him to think no more about me.

Miss Airlie was as kind and judicious as possible, but I could see that the idea of losing me was a great shock to her. We had neither of us ever contemplated the possibility of such a thing, and I almost hated Mr. Fenton for having caused us so much disturbance.

The next morning Miss Airlie received a letter, which, after reading, she handed to me. It was a straightforward, manly letter, from Mr. Fenton to Miss Airlie, requesting her to sanction his addresses to me, and expressing in high terms his admiration of my conduct on the previous day.

"I am sure that is a good man, Clarissa," said Miss Airlie, when I returned the letter; "you must not reject him lightly. I stand towards you in the place of your mother, and I shall act as she would have desired. She made her unhappy marriage from under our roof, and it would be a comfort to me to have her daughter marry well and happily. The evil consequences of her error have worked themselves out, and been converted to good."

Miss Airlie wrote to Mr. Fenton. She made his acquaintance and that of his sister. She liked Mr. Fenton so much, that she made me like him too—and the result was that it was settled I should marry him.

Parting from Miss Airlie was the only cloud upon my prospects: I did not know what she would do without me. But as the period of my marriage drew near, a great improvement was visible in her health; indeed, although she had no prospect of ever being anything but an invalid, she yet enjoyed a greater measure of health and comfort than she had ever before known. A winter in the South of France was recommended, and that seemed to make our separation more natural. A young cousin of Mr. Fenton's, to whom she had taken a great liking, was to go with her, and her old attendant (my predecessor, now a widow) was able to return to her, so that all difficulties were gradually smoothed away.

I received from my aunt a most gracious letter of congratulation, and a present of the famous book of the heraldic shields, crests, and armorial devices of every branch of the Donnelly family, which had been the labour of her life. On looking it over, I was surprised to see an entry purporting to be the quartering of Mr. Fenton's family arms, with the "wild cat rampant, with long whiskers proper," the sign of the honourable House of Donnelly. I could not imagine how she had discovered that he had any armorial bearings at all, and he was as much surprised as myself, until we recollected that the note he had ad-

dressed to her had been sealed with a crest belonging to his mother's family.

The day fixed for the marriage came at length. Miss Airlie had herself selected my dress, and, indeed, provided all my wardrobe. She went to church with us—but weddings are melancholy festivals, however happy may be the auspices. The parting from Miss Airlie was very painful indeed, and, for the time, quite overclouded the happiness and prosperity that seemed opening before me. Mr. Fenton was very kind, and seemed to sympathize so heartily in my grief, that I quite loved him for it. Miss Airlie had made all her preparations to start that same day. The chaise that was to take us home, and the travelling-carriage that was to convey her to Dover, came to the door at the same moment, so that no one was left behind to feel lonely.

A most charming surprise had been managed for me by Mr. Fenton and Miss Airlie. I knew that we were to go and reside on a small estate that Mr. Fenton had purchased in one of the midland counties, but I did not know exactly whereabouts it was situated ; and, indeed, both Mr. Fenton and Miss Airlie had always avoided telling me. His sister, Mrs. Roberts, had been equally uncommunicative.

Towards evening, I began to fancy that the road had a familiar look. It was quite dark

when we stopped before a gate, which opened into a road just wide enough to admit the chaise.

Two minutes more, and we were at HOME, in the old cottage that was once my grandfather's,—where my mother had died, and where I had been an ADOPTED CHILD.

## L'ENVOY.

I HAVE not much to add to the foregoing. I wrote it to please my husband, and as a memorial for our children.

Miss Airlie returned to England, after a prolonged absence, with confirmed health. She purchased the manor-house and park close in our neighbourhood, where she is still living, and we love each other as much as ever. Our "COTTAGE" has had to be enlarged and extended, till it has long lost all claim to its title.

My step-mother returned from America about three years after my marriage. My father was dead, and she took up her abode in the village near us. She finds plenty of little folks "to love her in her old age," which, it may be recollected, was her inducement to adopt me. She is a most excellent woman, and we are all attached to her.

My aunt Donnelly is dead, and, I believe, enjoyed the dignity of having the event announced by the family banshee.

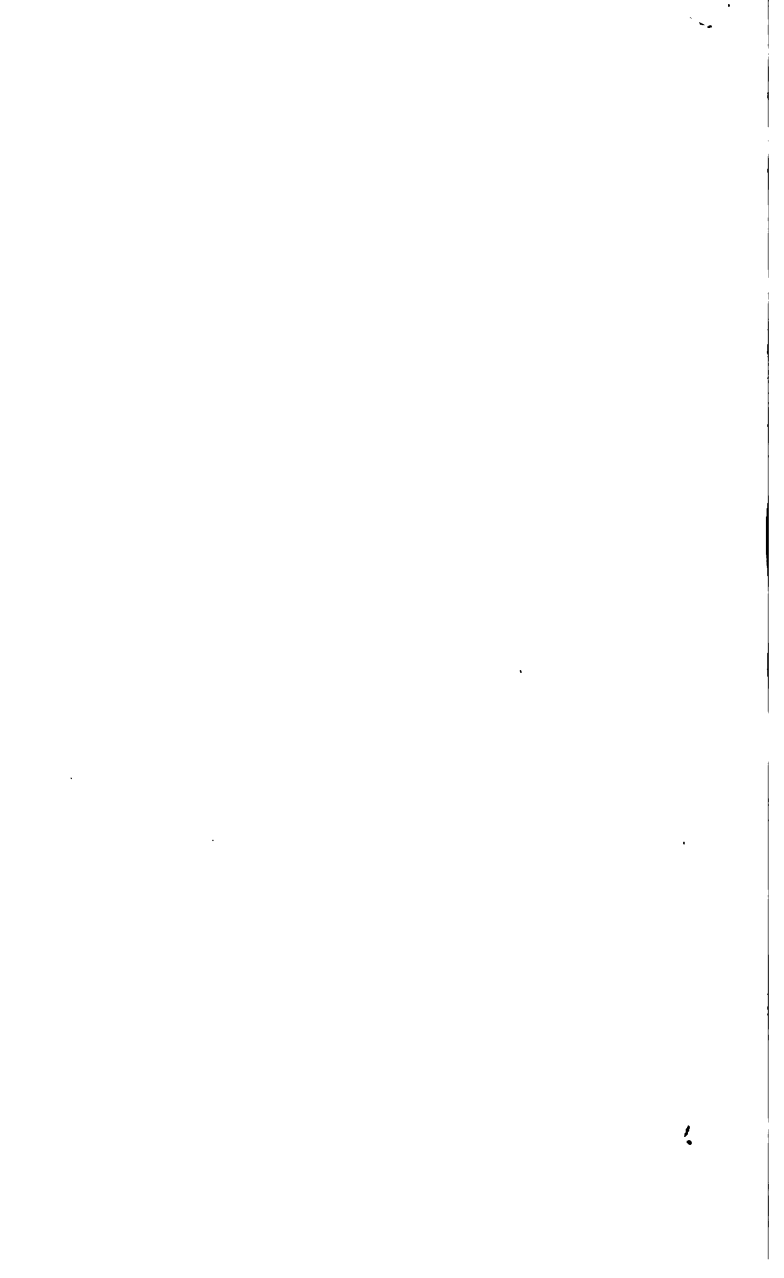
As to my aunt Simon, I do not know anything about her. My uncle Simon died several years

ago, and she has removed from this part of the country.

Miss Elizabeth Parry has given up her school, by which she has realized a competence, and spent last summer with me. Mrs. Parry is still alive, but naturally somewhat infirm.

As to myself, I have everything that a reasonable, or even an unreasonable, woman can desire in this world: in fact, sometimes I feel quite ashamed of being so happy,—I have so much more than I deserve!

THE END.



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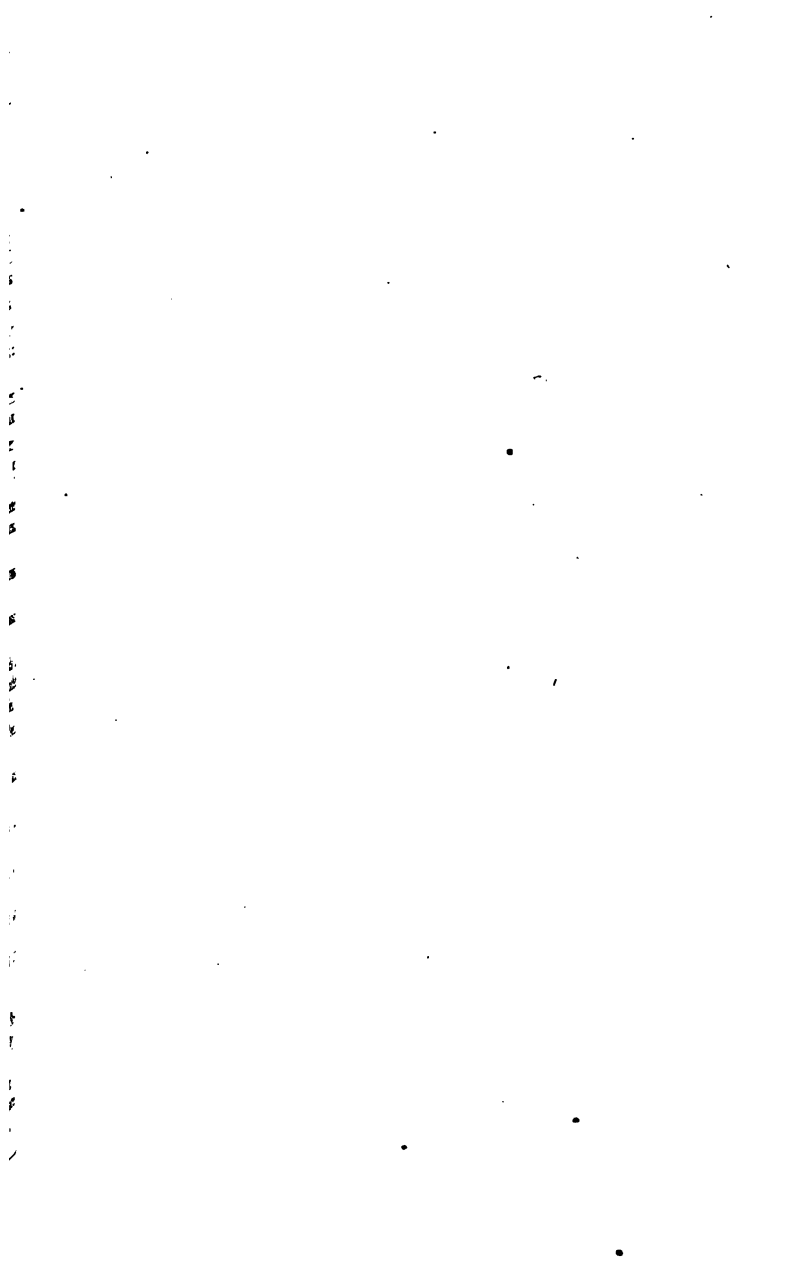
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